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St. John Fisher College, wstalbert@hotmail.com

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Unemployed at Ages 40 Through 65: Perceptions of Success of a Supported Employment Model Used in Low-Income, Urban Communities

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to inquire about the perceived success of a supported employment (SE) type model that assists individuals in obtaining and sustaining competitive employment more rapidly than traditional employment models. Using semi-structured interview questions, the researcher interviewed program administrators at community-based organizations (CBOs) who directly use the SE model with individuals they serve in their employment programs. A variation of the original SE model, which was influenced by supporting individuals with mental health issues in attaining and sustaining employment, was used in this study with participants associated with CBOs. The theoretical frameworks that guided this study were resilience theory, adult learning theory, and psychoanalytic theory of psychosocial development. The study found that the CBOs comprehensively support employment models, which include components that have goals, objectives, and outcomes that were measured for success. The CBOs conducted timely program reviews that identified areas of continuous improvement, constantly ensuring the programs implemented provided benefits to the participants and were in line with the CBOs' missions. The CBOs SE model programs to deliver skills and education training to prepare the participants for entry, or return to, sustainable employment. These programs also offered mental health services for the participants in need of these services. The CBOs serviced all genders, ethnic groups, socioeconomic statuses and age groups, 18 years and older, without discrimination to vulnerable populations in the communities they served. However, the education or skill set needs and job attainment outcomes were minimally captured for the 40 to 65-year-old age group.

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Unemployed at Ages 40 Through 65: Perceptions of Success of a Supported Employment
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By

Dottie Ann Clayton Stevenson

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of the requirements for the degree
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Supervised by

Dr. Bil Leipold

Committee Member

Dr. Janice Kelly

Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. School of Education

St. John Fisher College

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Dedication

To whom much is given, much will be required and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked (Luke 12:48). A change is going to come.

This dissertation is dedicated to people who have made positive impacts on my life, the people I have influenced, and the people who will be positively influenced by my work.

First, to my mother, Ruthie Clayton, (my Ruby) who never gave up on me and my ability to be great. She asked me one night after I had graduated high school, 6 months later than I should have, “what are you going to do?” I replied, “Momma, I’m going to college.” And, she said “okay.” So, Momma, I dedicate my entire educational journey (kindergarten to my doctorate) from 1980 to 2020, and beyond, to you. Princey loves you.

To my sister, Marie Clayton, (Kitty) who every day makes miracles happen in my life. I watched you go to school and work and said to myself, “I want to be like Sister one day.” The first big word I learned from you at age 5 or 6 was “couth” in Coney Island. You said this woman had no couth because she exhibited bad manners in a hot crowded restaurant that we had been waiting to be seated in. From that day forward, I knew no matter how uncomfortable a situation became, to always have couth. I also told myself that I had to increase my vocabulary to match yours. I am still striving. Clarice loves you forever.

To my daughter, Brooke-Lynn Marie Hawaii Stevenson (Brookey Pretty, Ahsokute), who every day makes me so proud to be your mother. I am known to everyone in her school as “Brookey’s Mom,” but this is perfectly okay because, one day, that will mean more to her than any gift imaginable. Mommy loves you, my sweet little Brookey Pretty.

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To my Dad, Clifton Suell (deceased), my Father, Trent O. Sexton (deceased), and my new Dad, Junis Young, for each being father figures in your own ways, taking care of me and always providing encouraging words. A father’s love never dies.

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To all of my work colleagues, thank you for embracing me. This work is so important to all of us, and we need to continue to support it, not just in lip service but also in action. Social Justice!

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Finally, to everyone who participated in this study, this work is for every person you support in your daily work. Thank you for your passion, dedication, and willingness to lend your voice.

Biographical Sketch

Dottie Ann Clayton Stevenson is currently the Vice President of Human Resources for the Mental Health Association of Westchester in Tarrytown, NY. Ms. Stevenson is also the founder and CEO of a team building and executive coaching firm, Steven Miller Coaching and Consulting, Inc. Ms. Stevenson has 25 years of human resources experience, working in various roles within human resources and in employment sectors from finance, publishing, collective bargaining units, and luxury retail to social services. Ms. Stevenson earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Human Services from Audrey C. Cohen College in New York City, a Master of Science degree in Education from Fordham University in New York City, a Paralegal Certificate from Pace University in New York City along with a host of certificates and certifications in human resources. Ms. Stevenson began her doctoral studies at St. John Fisher College's Executive Leadership program in May 2017. Ms. Stevenson pursued her research on the success of supported employment models for unemployed individuals, in low-income urban areas ages 40-65, under the direction of Dr. Bil Leipold and Dr. Janice Kelly and received the Ed.D. degree in 2020.

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to inquire about the perceived success of a supported employment (SE) type model that assists individuals in obtaining and sustaining competitive employment more rapidly than traditional employment models. Using semi-structured interview questions, the researcher interviewed program administrators at community-based organizations (CBOs) who directly use the SE model with individuals they serve in their employment programs. A variation of the original SE model, which was influenced by supporting individuals with mental health issues in attaining and sustaining employment, was used in this study with participants associated with CBOs. The theoretical frameworks that guided this study were resilience theory, adult learning theory, and psychoanalytic theory of psychosocial development.

The study found that the CBOs comprehensively support employment models, which include components that have goals, objectives, and outcomes that were measured for success. The CBOs conducted timely program reviews that identified areas of continuous improvement, constantly ensuring the programs implemented provided benefits to the participants and were in line with the CBOs' missions. The CBOs SE model programs to deliver skills and education training to prepare the participants for entry, or return to, sustainable employment. These programs also offered mental health services for the participants in need of these services.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The stress of losing employment, be it short term or long term, can be detrimental to an individual's desire to search for employment; unemployment lowers self-esteem, and it can affect resilience in an individual. For some older adults, ages 40-65 years, unemployment can be daunting and peppered with different sorts of poor self-definitions (Kira & Klehe, 2016). Being unemployed over age 40 can often lead to increased self-doubt, loss of self-confidence, anxieties about age, and experiencing doubt about re-employment because of potential experience and skills gap (Lassus, Lopez & Roscigno, 2015). Drawing from the research of Kira and Klehe (2016) and Lassus et al. (2015), being unemployed over age 40 affects the resilience of an individual. Resilience, according to Ledesma (2014), is the "ability to bounce back from adversity, frustration, and misfortune" (p. 1). Unemployment is not just about income loss, it is also about loss of personal identity, loss of self-esteem, loss of work relationships, routine interruption, loss of meaningful activity, and loss of skills (Waters & Moore, 2002a). The ability to bounce back after unemployment can be difficult for individuals because their work, or the type of work, for some, defines who they are in society and defines them in their family structure (Waters & Moore, 2002b).

While Kira and Klehe's (2016) research, on a whole, reveals unemployment being daunting and peppered with different sorts of poor self-definitions, recent research from Thompson and Dahling (2019) highlights that unemployment among individuals living in high poverty communities decreases self-importance, decreases individual well-being,

affects families, affects communities, and “increases susceptibility to mental and physical health concerns” (p. 674). The research of Goldsmith and Diette (2012), Heisig and Radl (2017), and Sage (2017) underscores unemployment as having a direct connection to poor mental and physical health. Job loss is associated with high rates of poor mental and physical health and with detrimental changes in family relationships, psychologically affecting the well-being of spouses and children as well (McKee-Ryan & Maitoza, 2018). Earlier research has shown that unemployment creates a risk factor for poor mental health (Montgomery, Cook, Bartley & Wadsworth, 1999), and unemployed individuals residing in neighborhoods with high unemployment rates experience poor mental health, which can often lead to suicide (Dooley & Catalano, 1986).

Since the Great Depression, psychologists, Eisenberg and Lazarsfield (1938), and sociologists, Jahoda, Lazarsfeld, and Zeisel (1933), argued that unemployment damages emotional health. Erikson (1959) suggested that the experience of being unemployed for a long period of time produces low self-esteem, leading to anxiety and self-doubt. A senior lecturer in the social sciences, Daniel Sage, critically added to the Jahoda et al. (1933, 1971) latent deprivation theory, which theorizes that employment fulfills many psychological needs such as competence, mental health, healthy development, social engagement, and motivation (Stiglbauer, & Batinic, 2012); and when an individual is no longer employed, he or she suffers a loss of identity and social activity (Sage, 2018). Sage (2018) suggested that unemployment is a loss that has a mourning process similar to death. According to Sage (2017), “Societies glorify employment as a signifier of identity and status . . . it is unsurprising that those without employment suffer” (p. 1). Barros, Dieguez, and Nunes (2019) discovered that employment has a direct connection with

happiness, and that happiness transcends societies. In their research, Barros et al. (2019) examined Maslow's (1943) theory of motivation, a Western theory that asserts that in order for individuals to experience happiness, there are five basic types of needs that must be met and maintained: (a) psychological, (b) safety, (c) social, (d) self-esteem, and (e) self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). Barros et al. (2019) revealed in their study that unemployment was linked to disrupting the human psychological state by causing unhappiness and, ultimately, low self-esteem and reduced self-actualization.

Research also informs that individuals over age 40 can experience employment attainment challenges because of a lack of work history and a skills gap (Lassus et al., 2015). Adults learning new skills or refreshing prior skills can increase their self-esteem, self-value, confidence, and create overall positive outcomes toward employment and/or career advancement (Hansman, 2017).

Knowles' (1989) adult learning theory asserts that adults have an internal desire to learn, and what is learned should be applicable immediately. The Knowles (1989) adult learning theory explains that adults are ready to learn based on their interests or to learn a skill that will help their career or work advancement. According to Knowles (1989), adults become eager to learn when there is an immediate need to have a skill or be able to perform a skill more efficiently. Additionally, adult learning has increased outcomes when the teacher becomes a coach or mentor to the learner (Hansman, 2017). According to Boyer (1984), coaching or a mentoring style of teaching is a student-centered approach that was identified by Knowles (1978), Maslow (1943), and Boyer (1984). Essentially, student-centered approach focuses on the learning needs of the student by considering the learners' interests and ambitions (Boyer, 1984). A student-centered approach is a

collaborative effort that creates an initial and continued desire to learn (Boyer, 1984). When individuals experience collaborative learning environments, happiness and self-actualization (Maslow, 1943) emerges. Individuals strive for higher education and extensive vocational skills with the belief that education and enhanced skills are the key to stable employment (Cairo & Cajner, 2018).

The importance of employment to individuals ages 40 through 65, according to Erikson (1959), is because work or a career contributes to happiness, builds confidence, builds self-esteem, offers financial stability, and provides a platform for a meaningful contribution to prior generations or to the next generation. There is a sense of pride with the age group that suggests they want to work. They want to, and, in some cases, they have to take care of their families by earning an income (Erikson, 1959). Within this age group of 40-65, there is a sub age group, 40-59-year-olds, that is part of the sandwich generation (Hamill & Goldberg, 1997; Vlachantoni, Evandrou, Falkingham, & Gomez-Leon, 2019). The sandwich generation has an obligation to be the sole caretakers of elderly parents, who may have ailments, and, at the same time, the sandwich generation cares for children (Hamill & Goldberg, 1997; Vlachantoni et al., 2019). Erikson (1959) asserted that healthy personality and emotional development during adulthood require that individuals believe they are making strides to enrich themselves by contributing to their family and community. Moreover, when there is a major life disruption, such as unemployment during the ages of 40 through 65, this can create stagnation from successfully moving into the next stages of life (Erikson, 1959). For this age group, the next stage of life is assessing self-satisfaction (Erikson, 1959). Self-satisfaction is an evaluation and reflection based on one's life accomplishments with employment,

education, family, housing, and other personal goals (Brewington & Nassar-McMillan, 2000).

Problem Statement

Unemployment for older adults in the age range of 40-65 years, who live in low-income urban communities, is a problem (Anderson, Richardson, Fields, & Harootyan, 2013). Low-income, urban communities are highly populated with Black and Hispanic residents who are impacted during recessions and economic changes in the workforce (Anderson et al., 2013; Broman, Hamilton, & Hoffman, 2012). Lowrey's (2017) research reported that the most severely impacted populations affected by recessions are individuals, specifically, Blacks and Latinos, ages 55 and older, with only high school diplomas, and who are living in urban neighborhoods. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS, n.d.-a) agrees with Lowrey's (2017) research, as the BLS in 2018 found similar results on the impact in urban neighborhoods. The BLS further concluded that, still, in 2018, a full 10 years after the 2007/2008 recession, long-term unemployment remains significant with this age and ethnic group in urban communities (BLS, n.d.-b)

This populations' resilience is challenged when attempting to attain and sustain employment. Attaining and sustaining employment for some individuals in this age group range is a challenge because of societal issues such as previous involvement in the criminal justice system, homelessness, and lack of family support systems (Hoven et al., 2016; Raphael, 2010). In addition to societal issues, some individuals in low-income urban areas often lack education, vocational skills, and they have gaps in work experience that present challenges in securing employment (Hoven et al., 2016; Lindsay, McCracken, & McQuaid, 2003). Poor mental health, for some individuals, has also been

identified as a challenge to this population's ability to maintain and sustain employment (Goldsmith & Diette, 2012; Heisig & Radl, 2017; Linn, Sandifer, & Stein, 1985; Rosenthal, Carroll-Scott, Earnshaw, Santilli, & Ickovics, 2012; Sage, 2017). There is a consistent correlation with poor mental health and attaining and sustaining employment (Olesen, Butterworth, Leach, Kelaher, & Pirkis, 2013). When individuals experience poor mental health, it is difficult for them to often express how they feel; a level of embarrassment is sometimes present due to the continued stigma of mental health—not just in urban communities—but also on a whole (Byers, Areal, & Yaffe, 2012; Clement et al., 2015).

As jobs in the United States continue to become deindustrialized (local jobs moving to other parts of the country or out of the country) and the victim of economic globalization (goods and services produced at lower costs in other countries), jobs, such as factory work and manufacturing, are disappearing from the local job market (Williams, Mohammed, Leavell, & Collins, 2010). The disappearance of the local job market effects low-income urban communities, leaving higher unemployment rates in those communities (Williams et al., 2010). With the disappearance of local work and lack of skills, this population could suffer further into poverty (Williams et al., 2010).

There is a model used in low-income urban CBOs that have had success in helping individuals attain and sustain employment. The model is called supported employment (SE). While the SE model was influenced by mental health advocates (Bond & Drake, 2014), for purposes of this study, SE used in CBOs serves as an employer-engagement type of service (Spaulding & Blount, 2018). The SE model used in CBOs has the similar service components of the Bond and Drake (2014) SE model that

are used in CBOs; however, the CBOs use their SE model for all populations in the community they serve to assist individuals with attaining and sustaining competitive employment (Spaulding & Blount, 2018). Some of these components are assigning a career or job coach to help individuals with professional resume writing, interviewing skills, professional branding, reskilling techniques, and extensive follow-up post-job attainment (Spaulding & Blount, 2018). This SE model seeks to help individuals overcome barriers to employment by preparing them to become employable (Spaulding & Blount, 2018). Moreover, built into the SE model is a component that creates an opportunity for CBOs to understand hiring needs, such as education level, skills set, and even the culture of employers, so they can match individuals with employer need (Spaulding & Blount, 2018). SE, which is used in CBOs, also provides case management services that assist unemployed individuals with support services, such as financial planning health insurance information, including mental health services and housing options to help navigate through life's setbacks or insistent challenges (Bond & Drake, 2014).

The researcher conducted a case study using semi-structured interviews to understand, from the CBO program administrators' perspective, whether the SE model has been shown to help participants, ages 40-65, attain and sustain employment. The program administrators at the CBOs are employed at the CBO and are responsible for oversight and management of the SE model.

Theoretical Rationale

The theoretical frameworks that guided this study were resilience theory, adult learning, and psychoanalytic theory of psychosocial development. Respectively, the

motivating connection between the theories are adults processing, adapting, surviving, learning, and having self-worth during adversity, trauma, and stressful times (Cicchetti & Garmezy, 1993; Erikson, 1959, 1966; Knowles, 1989). Unemployment, for the purposes of this study, is an identified stressor that creates hardship and adversity for individuals living in urban communities ages 40-65 (Broman et al., 2012).

Resilience theory, founded in 1961 by clinical psychologist Norman Garmezy, whose primary work in schizophrenia researched how cognitive skills and self-motivation could prevent declining mental health, is defined as being able to adapt during adversity, trauma, tragedy, or stress (Cicchetti & Garmezy, 1993; Garmezy, 1991). Resilience theory was reviewed as an innovative theory used in social work during the early 1990s, but it since has been critiqued as a trend, a feeling, or positive thoughts—lacking evidence outcomes (van Breda, 2018). According to van Breda (2018), resilience has been defined in multiple ways, such as “something intrinsic to the individual, while others refer to it in a more holistic sense” (p. 2). Another set of resilience definitions identified by van Breda (2018) are “the competencies or capacities of people, while others refer to it as positive functioning in the face of adversity” (p. 2). Because of any of these definitions, resilience as a theory has been critiqued for legitimacy, cultural acceptance, and for being evidence based (van Breda, 2018). Resilience transcends cultures and ethnic backgrounds during times of adversity, because humans have an innate spirit to want to have hope and optimism during stressful adverse times (Benard, 2002). Research also suggests resilience has a connection to religion or spirituality, and therefore, it does not work for all populations, such as atheists or other non-believing groups (Foy, Drescher, & Watson, 2011). However, resilience, in its basic form, is not a

conceptual or a mandated religious practice connected to a religion or to a religious figure, but it is naturally part of the human make-up (Foy et al., 2011). Although, resilience coupled with spirituality or religion is practiced by many individuals as a source of strength to get through adversity (Foy et al., 2011). The notion that resilience lacks outcomes does not consider resilience as a thought coupled with an action that can present positive outcomes (Daniel, Wassell, & Gilligan, 1999).

For purposes of this study, resilience means the ability to bounce back or having the courage to come back from difficult experiences (Cicchetti & Garnezy 1993; Garnezy, 1991; Ginsburg, 2016). For unemployed individuals living in urban communities, who are ages 40 through 65, bouncing back is the key to success in attaining and sustaining employment (Broman et al., 2012). Resilience theory not only speaks of coming back from difficult experiences, the theory is synonymous with optimism and positivity during threatening times (Reivich & Shatte, 2002, 2003). Theorist recognize that preventing adversity and stress is impractical (Reivich & Shatte, 2002, 2003). However, resilience theory offers survival strategies, sometimes called the “seven C’s of survival,” used to help children and teens overcome adversity, but it can be used interchangeably with adults in acquiring and building essential skills to overcoming life’s adversities (Garnezy, 1991; Ginsburg, 2016; Ginsburg & Jablow, 2005; Reivich & Shatte, 2002, 2003). These survival strategies and essential skills are:

1. Control – Having and participating in opportunities that lend a sense of control. Being able to make choices and have a voice in how to bounce back from stress and adversity.

2. Competence/Competency – Having the ability to learn how to deal with stress, using tools and techniques to manage stress.
3. Coping – Learning healthy ways of dealing with stress and using additional supports, such as family, friends, and community resources, to reinforce coping strategies.
4. Confidence/Self-Awareness – Being able to recognize success in areas in stress and adversity while moving into the next challenge of life.
5. Connection/Positive Emotion – Emotional security by encouraging individuals to express their feelings, and to accept and support the individuals through whatever emotions are expressed. Being able to work through complex emotions with trusted individuals. Feelings and thoughts heard by someone else helps strengthen emotional bonds.
6. Character – Allowing individuals to explore who they are, who they want to become, and understanding their values and talents.
7. Contribution – Helping individuals realize their contribution to their life, family, and being able to care for the well-being of others.

Knowles adult learning theory from 1980 suggests that andragogy (adult learning) means any form of learning, and that adult learning must be impactful and add meaning to their lives (Kearsley, 2010). Knowles (1978) adapted the term andragogy from German elementary fitness educator, Alexander Kapp, to develop a theory for adult learning (Knowles, 1978). Knowles (1978, 1980) recognized adults are self-directed (they decide what they want to learn) and have a desire to be taught (Knowles, 1978,

1980). Adult learning and training programs must consider this adult, self-directed concept to be successful (Knowles, 1978, 1980).

Alexander Kapp first used the term andragogy in 1833 during his writings about adults needing education (Knowles, 1978; Reischmann, 2004). The term andragogy, used by Kapp, simply stated that adults need education for skills development and in various work occupations (Ozuah, 2016). Kapp's view of andragogy focused on inner qualities and competence, drawing from the works of Plato's philosophy on education that speaks to humans having a preexisting understanding of skills, and it is the responsibility of teachers/instructors to draw it out of the individuals (Knowles, 1978; Ozuah, 2016; Yin & Lim, 2020). Essentially, Plato suggested the skills needed are innately present; the skills just need to be developed further by training and mentoring by the instructor (Knowles, 1978; Ozuah, 2016; Yin & Lim, 2020).

According to Kearsley (2010), based on Knowles (1980), there are five assumptions about the characteristics of adult learners (andragogy) that benefit the learner and the learning experience, they are:

1. Self-concept – as individuals mature, their self-concept moves from one of being a dependent personality toward one of being a self-directed human being.
2. Adult Learner Experience – as individuals mature, they accumulate a growing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasing resource for learning.
3. Readiness to Learn – as individuals mature, their readiness to learn becomes oriented increasingly to the developmental tasks of their social roles.

4. Orientation to Learning – As individuals mature, their time perspective changes from one of postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application, and, accordingly, their orientation toward learning shifts from one of subject centeredness to one of problem centeredness.
5. Motivation to Learn – as individuals mature, the motivation to learn is internal (Knowles, 1984; Kearsley, 2010).

Knowles (1984a, 1984b) also applied an idea of collaboration between the adult learner and instruction. These ideas formed principles that detail how adult learners want to be involved with the learning goals and in the assessment of what they have learned.

According to Kearsley (2010), based on Knowles (1984a, 1984b), there are four principles applied to adult learning:

1. Adults need to be involved in the planning and evaluation of their instruction.
2. Experience (including mistakes) provides the basis for the learning activities.
3. Adults are most interested in learning subjects that have immediate relevance and impact to their job or personal life.
4. Adult learning is problem centered rather than content oriented (Kearsley, 2010; Knowles, 1984a, 1984b).

Unemployed individuals living in low-income urban communities, ages 40-65, sometimes lack the skills and education to attain employment, but that does not mean they are unable to learn or have no desire to learn. Research suggests some adults want to learn and are motivated to learn as sense of accomplishment (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 2017). Adults want to learn so they can perform well, and most adults learn at their own pace (Dunn, 2002; Knowles, 1984a, 1984b; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 2017). As it

relates to this study, adult learning in employment programs identifies the goals and objectives for learning new skills or enhancing skills for employment and assessing individuals' skill set for jobs (Spaulding & Blount, 2018). Learning new skills, or refreshing skills, is different for everyone. Adults have different learning styles, which can either improve or prevent their learning (Lee, Choi, & Cho, 2019). Different learning styles relates to how individuals vary regarding what method of training or study is most effective for them (Lee et al., 2019). Training methods include in-person, web-based, on-the-job, audio learning, or group learning (Lee et al., 2019). In adult learning, importance should be placed on understanding the needs, preferences, and strengths of mature (adult) learners (Lee et al., 2019). Socioeconomic status can also affect how adults learn—especially when managing stress, learning can be difficult (Bergman, Gross, Berry, & Shuck, 2014). Adults over the age of 40 learn for different reasons, such as on-the-job learning, learning new skills to improve their employment options, or they lack employment options (Nakai, Chang, Snell, & Fluckinger, 2011).

Erik Erikson's (1959, 1966) psychoanalytic theory of psychosocial development, also known as lifespan developmental theory in adulthood, is viewed from several perspectives. The identified perspective for this research was Erikson's (1959) polar alternative resolutions. Polar alternative resolutions are life stage-specific crises that are related to different life cycle periods and are measured by how successful an individual develops from one crisis stage to another (Erikson, 1959).

Erikson (1959) is most famous for his work in refining and expanding Freud's theory of stages (Boeree, 2006). According to Erikson (1959), development functions by the epigenetic principle. This principle states that individuals develop through a

predetermined unfolding of their personalities in eight stages. Progress through each stage, in part, is determined by one's success, or lack thereof, in all of the previous stages. A little like the unfolding of a rosebud, each petal opens up at a certain time, in a certain order, which nature, through its genetics, has determined (Boeree, 2006). If one interferes in the natural order of development by pulling a petal forward prematurely or out of order, this affects the development of the entire flower (Boeree, 2006). Each stage involves certain developmental tasks that are psychosocial in nature (Boeree, 2006).

According to McCloud (2013), the eight stages according to Erikson's (1959) psychoanalytic theory of psychosocial development are as follows:

1. Trust versus Mistrust – Erikson's (1959) first psychosocial crisis occurs during the first year or so of life. During this stage, the infant is uncertain about the world in which it lives. To resolve these feelings of uncertainty, the infant looks toward its primary caregiver for stability and consistency of care.
2. Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt – The child is developing physically and becomes more mobile. Between the ages of 18 months and 3 years, children begin to assert their independence by walking away from their mother, choosing which toy to play with, making choices about what they like to wear and eat, and so forth. Erikson (1959) stated that it is critical that parents allow their children to explore the limits of their abilities within an encouraging environment that is tolerant of failure.
3. Initiative versus Guilt – Around age 3, and continuing to age 5, children assert themselves more frequently. During this period, the primary feature involves the child regularly interacting with other children at school. Central to this

stage is play, as it provides children with the opportunity to explore their interpersonal skills through initiating activities.

4. Industry (Competence) versus Inferiority – This stage occurs during childhood between the ages of 5 and 12. This is the stage during which children will learn to read and write, do sums, and perform tasks on their own. It is at this stage that the child's peer group will gain greater significance and become a major source of the child's self-esteem. The child now feels the need to win approval by demonstrating specific competencies that are valued by society and begins to develop a sense of pride in his or her accomplishments.
5. Identity versus Role Confusion – This stage occurs during adolescence, from approximately 12 to 18 years of age. During this stage, adolescents search for a sense of self and personal identity through an intense exploration of personal values, beliefs, and goals. The adolescent mind is essentially a mind or moratorium—a psychosocial stage—between childhood and adulthood, and between the morality learned by the child and the ethics to be developed by the adult.
6. Intimacy versus Isolation – Occurring in young adulthood (ages 18 to 40 years), individuals begin to share themselves more intimately with others. They explore relationships, leading to longer-term commitments with someone other than a family member. Successful completion of this stage can result in happy relationships and a sense of commitment, safety, and care within a relationship. Avoiding intimacy and fearing commitment and

relationships can lead to isolation, loneliness, and sometimes depression.

Success in this stage will lead to the virtue of love.

7. Generativity versus Stagnation – During middle adulthood (ages 40 to 65 years), individuals establish their careers, settle down within a relationship, begin their own families, and develop a sense of being a part of the bigger picture. They give back to society through raising children, being productive at work, and participating in community activities and organizations. By failing to achieve these objectives, individuals become stagnant and feel unproductive. Success in this stage will lead to the virtue of care.
8. Ego Integrity versus Despair – As individuals grow older (65+ years) and become senior citizens, they tend to slow down their productivity and explore life as a retired person. It is during this time that people contemplate their accomplishments and develop integrity if they view themselves as leading a successful life. Erikson (1959) believed that if people see their lives as unproductive, experience feelings of guilt about their past, or feel that they did not accomplish their life goals, they become dissatisfied with life and develop despair, often leading to depression and hopelessness. (Erikson, 1966)

For the purposes of this study, the researcher focused on the seventh stage, generativity versus stagnation. This stage of development is thought to occur during middle adulthood, ages 40-65 (Erikson, 1959). According to Nantais and Stack (2017), “This stage includes such important tasks as bearing and raising children, increasing one’s influence in their chosen professional field and integrating numerous processes” (p. 1).

Work (employment) has long been regarded as an important facet to positive mental health and identity development (Erikson, 1966). Research shows that job loss results in a significant deterioration in mental health, affecting the well-being of individuals (Cobb & Kasl, 1977; Linn et al., 1985), but returning to work after unemployment leads to significant improvements in mental health (Payne & Graham Jones, 1987; Warr & Jackson, 1985).

Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld (1938) were the first psychologists to sequence the unpleasant and emotionally destructive consequences of unemployment. Because psychological well-being is a multidimensional concept, the impact of unemployment on mental health takes many forms including depression, suicidal ideation, anxiety, low self-esteem, and strained personal relations. Since then, many prominent psychologists have theorized about the relation between employment, joblessness, and psychological well-being (Nica, Manole, & Briscariu, 2016).

Concurring research has suggested that satisfaction with being employed is the key factor in differentiating employment and unemployment experiences (De Witte, Vander Elst, & De Cuyper, 2015). Being satisfactorily employed enhances psychological growth and self-esteem, but being unsatisfactorily employed is detrimental to psychological health, and it is psychologically as bad as being unemployed (Winefield, 2002; Winefield, Tiggemann, Winefield, & Goldney, 1993). In earlier research, Seligman, Maier, and Solomon (1971) found that unemployment results in feelings of helplessness that arise when people believe they have little influence over important events in their lives, such as securing meaningful work. It is clear that there is a strong

link between psychological and physical ill health and work, which challenges the assumption regarding the positive mental health benefits of work.

Potential Significance of the Study

This study is important because unemployment for older adults in the age range of 40-65, who are living in low-income urban communities, is a problem (Anderson et al., 2013). The goal of this study was to collaboratively speak to the needs and concerns of this population and the CBOs that provide SE services to individuals living in a community.

The research design type for this current study is case study. Case study research creates an in-depth examination of one or several cases, instances, or subjects of interest to analyze a contemporary phenomenon (Yin, 2003). Each question was designed to elicit honest and open responses from the participants. The researcher removed all biases and practiced ethical standards when collecting and analyzing the responses from the study participants.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to elicit the perceptions of program administrators in an urban CBO regarding the success of the SE model that included servicing unemployed individuals aged 40-65 (older individuals) in low-income urban communities within a large northeastern city. A case study was the best method to understand unemployment as a phenomenon (Valletta & Kuang, 2010) from the program administrators' perspectives. Using a case study data collection method, the researcher set out to discover, using semi-structured interviews, why program administrators decide to enhance their program with an SE model and what outcomes they hope for from the

model, based on the population served—specifically, older, unemployed adults (Yin, 2003, 2009, 2017). This case study sought to highlight why decisions were made and how those decisions were implemented, based on prior results (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003, 2009, 2017).

Research Questions

The core research questions that directed this case study were:

1. What are the perceptions of success from program administrators at community-based organizations of the supported employment model for unemployed individuals ages 40-65?
2. How do program administrators, who utilize the supported employment model for their clients, define and measure success?
3. What, if any, improvement plan was identified by the program administrators for the supported employment model?

Definition of Terms

Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) –nonprofit groups that work in local urban localities to improve the lives of the residents. Services and programs found in CBOs include health care information and awareness; age-specific programs, such as affordable day care, teen programs, and senior day programs; education resources; access to technology; and access to spaces and information for the disabled. Communities represented by CBOs are typically disadvantaged or impoverished neighborhoods (Chandra et al., 2013).

Crisis – a situation that has reached a serious phase or a significant reflection of one’s life (Fook, 2015).

Job Loss – no longer having an employment through no fault of the individual, including job closures, reduced hours, or an employer moving or downsizing (McKee-Ryan & Maitoza, 2018).

Mental Health – the foundation for thinking, communicating, learning, resilience, and self-esteem. Mental health is also central to relationships, personal and emotional well-being, and contributing to community or society. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood to adulthood (Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Singer, 1996).

Unemployment – defined by the New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL) as individuals who do not have a job, have actively looked for work in the past 4 weeks, and are currently available for work. People who were temporarily laid off and are waiting to be called back to a job are included in the unemployment statistics (NYSDOL, n.d.-a).

Workforce Career Centers – organizations that prepare and connect qualified candidates to job opportunities in urban communities. These centers make matches, both for candidates and employers, by using a unique combination of recruitment expertise, industry knowledge, and skill-building workshops to strengthen candidates' employment prospects (City of New York, 2020).

Chapter Summary

Unemployment for older adults in the age range of 40-65 years, who are living in low-income urban communities, is a problem (Anderson et al., 2013). Some individuals in this age group are unable to attain and sustain employment because of a myriad of socioeconomic factors, lack of a skillset and education to attain employment, societal barriers, and potential emerging health problems. Research from Kira and Klehe (2016)

and Lassus et al. (2015) reveals unemployed over the age of 40 effects the resilience of an individual. Resilience, according to Ledesma (2014), is the “ability to bounce back from adversity, frustration, and misfortune” (p. 1). Unemployment is not just about income loss, it is also about loss of personal identity, loss of self-esteem, loss of work relationships, routine interruption, loss of meaningful activity, and loss of skills (Waters & Moore, 2002a).

The importance of gaining skills for employment is a major component of adult learning. The Knowles (1989) adult learning theory explains that adults are ready to learn based on their interests or to learn a skill that will help their career or work advancement. According to Knowles (1989), adults become eager to learn when there is an immediate need to have a skill or be able to perform a skill more efficiently. Additionally, adult learning has increased outcomes when the teacher becomes a coach or mentor to the learner (Hansman, 2017).

The importance of employment to individuals ages 40-65, according to Erikson (1959), is because work or a career contributes to happiness, builds confidence, builds self-esteem, offers financial stability, and provides a platform for meaningful contribution to prior generations or to the next generation. There is a sense of pride with this age group that suggests they want to work, and, in some cases, they have to take care of their families by earning an income (Erikson, 1959).

There is a model, SE, used in low-income, urban, CBOs that has had success in helping individuals attain and sustain employment. While the SE model was influenced within mental health (Bond & Drake, 2014), for purposes of this study, the SE model used in CBOs serves as an employer-engagement type of service (Spaulding & Blount,

2018). The SE model used in CBOs has similar service components of the Bond and Drake (2014) SE model; however, the CBOs use their SE model for all populations in the communities they serve to assist individuals with attaining and sustaining competitive employment (Spaulding & Blount, 2018).

The purpose of this study was to elicit the perceptions of program administrators in urban CBOs regarding the success of the SE model, which that included servicing unemployed individuals, aged 40-65 (older individuals), in low-income, urban communities within a large northeastern United States city. This study sought to highlight the factors and barriers in the SE model to create opportunities for improved public and private policies for CBOs.

Chapter 2 follows with a review of the literature that provides a discussion of the impact of unemployment on adults, who are aged 40-65, living in low-income, urban communities. Chapter 3 presents the study's methodology by describing how the researcher collected the data for the study. Chapter 4 provides an analysis of the study by detailing how the researcher used the obtained information from the participants to support the significance of the study. Finally, Chapter 5, from the researcher's perspective, provides a discussion of the findings, presents limitations of the study, and offers recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Introduction and Purpose

This literature review provides an examination of the impact of short- and long-term unemployment on older adults, ages 40-65, who live in low-income, urban communities, and it identifies the model(s) that best support this group's reentry into the workforce. First, the researcher defined unemployment as it pertains to older adults. Second, the researcher discussed some of the socioeconomic and societal issues associated with unemployment; specifically, for older adults living in low-income, urban communities. Third, the researcher sought to understand what employment model(s) best support unemployed older adults with returning to the workforce. Last, the researcher sought to identify model(s) that can support unemployed older adults, ages 40-65, in returning to the workforce.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (The Balance, n.d.) defines long-term unemployment as an individual being out of work for 27 weeks (6 months), or longer, while actively looking for a job. A congressional committee report on unemployment defined 6 months as long-term unemployment, and 12 months as very long-term unemployment (von Wachter, 2010). In general, long-term unemployed individuals face a particularly difficult time rejoining the job market (Couch & Placzek, 2010). However, research has shown that the phenomenon of long-term unemployment (more than 27 weeks) increases with age. A study by Kosanovich and Theodossiou (2015) found that

“22.1% of the unemployed under age 25 had looked for work for 27 weeks or longer, compared with 44.6% of those 55 years and older” (p. 5).

There are two types of long-term unemployment, cyclical unemployment and structural unemployment. Cyclical unemployment is symptomatic of an economic recession. Adverse outcomes, such as job loss, business downsizing, mortgage defaults, and other personal financial instabilities, often underlie an economic recession, thereby increasing unemployment rates (Diamond, 2013). Structural unemployment occurs when workers’ skills no longer meet the needs of the job market (Diamond, 2013). As explained by Mankiw (1989), “The unemployment rate is an imperfect measure of joblessness. Some people who call themselves unemployed may actually not want to work, and some people who would like to work have left the labor force after an unsuccessful search” (p. 270).

In 2012, data gathered by the Beveridge Curve, an instrument used to measure the amount of job vacancies against the unemployment rate, found that the relationship between unemployment and job vacancies does not suggest that having more job vacancies results in lower unemployment rates (Bouvet, 2012). The Beveridge Curve data suggest that even though there are job vacancies, individuals seeking employment are unable to fill those vacancies due to lack of skills. This is indicative of structural unemployment, one of the causes of long-term unemployment (Elsby, Michaels, & Ratner, 2015; Ghayad & Dickens, 2012).

Unemployment has an adverse impact on society (Khuhawar & Shah, 2019). The major societal consequences of unemployment include poor physical and mental health, increased health care costs, economic failure in communities, homelessness, poverty,

changes within families, and reduced life expectancy (Lee, 2018). Research supports that unemployment has a direct connection with psychological distress (poor mental health) (Daly & Delaney, 2013). Erikson (1959, 1966) lent support to the idea that a connection exists between poor mental health and unemployment. However, based on their cross-sectional and panel data survey, researchers Kessler, Turner, and House (1988) found that poor mental health was present before unemployment and that the crisis of unemployment intensified the disease, therefore presenting a challenge to determining whether unemployment causes poor mental health. In contrast, research conducted in late the 1980s supported the connection between unemployment and poor mental health (noted depression, isolation, and anxiety) and that career development resources, by design, help reduce poor mental health in unemployed individuals (Herr, 1989).

Traditional vocational rehabilitation programs for unemployed adults are available primarily in state-operated workforce development centers that offer employment attainment services and workforce development programs. These services include resume writing, job referral, job training, and other employment-seeking resources for unemployed individuals. Researchers suggest that a well-implemented evidence-based job placement program that utilizes a client-centered approach best supports individuals returning to the workforce (Spaulding & Blount, 2018). A client-centered approach entails building a trusting relationship that focuses on the participant's self-insights and acceptance of the helping process (Campbell, 2018). Using a client-centered approach, the individual collaborates with a career counselor in the job-seeking process (Spaulding & Blount, 2018). This client-centered approach is used to better understand the participant's past work experience, education, and current job needs and

interests versus a traditional vocational rehabilitation program that focuses on training first followed by finding a job (Spaulding & Blount, 2018). Research further indicates that a well-implemented client-centered and evidence-based job placement model will employ trained professionals who are able to assess poor mental health in a participant and provide early intervention through internal or external supports (Drebing et al., 2012). For the purposes of this review, based on how the literature defines the age group of 40-65 years, the terms *middle-aged* and *older adults* are used interchangeably.

Overview of the Review of the Literature

This review of the literature includes empirical studies that identify the needs of older unemployed individuals, ages 40-65, and how best to support this population's efforts to attain and sustain employment. The research also includes alternative views from other experts comparing and contrasting perspectives about unemployment and other factors relating to unemployment. Those factors include socioeconomic status, lack of skillset and education to attain employment, societal barriers, and potential emerging health problems.

Social and Economic Issues of Unemployment

Unemployment has a major impact on society, social programs, and health care (Khuhawar & Shah, 2019). When the economic recession (2008 to 2010) hit the United States and Europe, mental health claims and suicide rates increased (Wahlbeck & McDaid, 2012). The economic recession of 2008, also called the financial crisis, caused many Americans to lose their jobs, homes, and pensions, creating an atmosphere of hopelessness (Wahlbeck & McDaid, 2012). According to Riumallo-Herl, Basu, Stuckler, Courtin, and Avendano (2014), for older workers aged 50-65, "Income losses may have

devastating consequences for their retirement plans, increase their risk of poverty, and render them more vulnerable to mental illness” (p. 1581). Riumallo-Herl et al. (2014) stated, “Prior evidence suggests that job loss among older workers is associated with poorer health, increased depression and substance use” (p. 1581).

During the 2018-2019 U.S. government shutdown, which occurred because Democrats and Republicans were unable to reach an agreement on border security, including the building of a wall between the United States and Mexico border, about 800,000 U.S. federal workers were placed on furlough or asked to work without compensation (Haslett, 2019). The government shutdown caused many furloughed federal workers to experience a compilation of stress, anxiety, and depression. Time.com conducted interviews with furloughed federal workers in which they expressed worry about the lack of compensation, while they attempted to maintain their basic human needs, such as shelter, food, and adequate health care (Gajanan, 2018; Henwood, Derejko, Couture, & Padgett, 2015). The U.S. federal employees’ soon-depleted savings negatively affected their ability to maintain their families’ lifestyle after the furlough.

Moreover, in August 2019, David Rubenstein of the Carlyle Group, a large private equity firm, conveyed in an interview on *CBS This Morning* that the United States could be heading toward another economic recession. The last recession in mid-2007/2008 devastated many Americans with unemployment and housing losses, representing two major needs from Maslow’s (1943) human motivation theory hierarchy of needs. With the current unemployment rates, according to the BLS (n.d.-a), trending at 3.70%, some Americans have still not recovered from the most recent recession. The unemployment rate trends appear questionable in tabulation because according to a 2017

article in *The Atlantic* written by Lowrey, there are at least a million people from the 2007/2008 recession who are not accounted for as reentering the workforce. Lowrey (2017) reported that the most severely impacted populations affected by recessions are individuals, specifically Blacks and Latinos, ages 55 and older, with only high school diplomas, and who are living in urban neighborhoods. The BLS (n.d.-a) agrees with Lowrey's 2017 research, as the BLS in 2018 found similar results on impact in urban neighborhoods. The BLS (n.d.-a) further concluded that still in 2018, a full 10 years after the 2007/2008 recession, long-term unemployment remains significant with this age and ethnic group in urban communities.

At the end of fourth quarter 2019, economist's reporters Joseph Zeballos-Roig and Andy Kiersz (2020) from Business Insiders, an online business site, reported from the Trump Administration that job growth in the United States has steadily grown and the United States is stronger economically. However, taking a closer look at the types of growing jobs across the United States, the top two jobs reported are mining and construction jobs. While construction jobs are on the rise, mining jobs are not located in cities, like New York, and therefore, they are not geographically accessible to unemployed residents in or around those low-income, urban communities. According to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (2020), mining in New York State "occurs in every county in New York State except Bronx, Kings (Brooklyn), New York City (Manhattan), Queens and Richmond (Staten Island)" (New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, 2020, para. 1). According to the BLS (n.d.-b), construction jobs are projected to grow by 10% from 2018-2028. The BLS attributes this 10-year growth to "increase[d] demand for new buildings, roads, and other

structures, which will create new jobs in construction and extraction occupations” (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019, para. 2).

Nonetheless, unemployment can be a difficult event to an individual, and coping with the effects of unemployment are sometimes unbearable (Linden & Rotter, 2019). Unemployment, by nature, promotes greater risks to the mental health of individuals, but during times of economic crisis, when the economic future of society appears bleak, these issues intensify (Crabtree, 2014). Psychological distress and depression are the most commonly found mental health issues during these times. A study done by the Gallup-Healthways Wellbeing Index (Crabtree, 2014) found that unemployed individuals are twice as likely to be treated for depression than those who are employed—12.4% versus 5.6%, respectively. Moreover, that “number increases for individuals who have been unemployed for 27 weeks or more (long-term unemployed currently around 3.4 million people), [for whom] the depression rate is 18%, nearly one in five” (Crabtree, 2014). In general, unemployment has a direct financial impact on society. “Even in February of 2017—with the unemployment rate hovering around 5 percent—unemployment benefits that include food benefits and Medicaid totaled \$2.96 billion for the month” (Chron, 2019, para. 9). In March 2018, 1 year later, an article entitled *Total Monthly Unemployment Insurance Benefits Paid in the United States between March 2017 and March 2018 (in Billion U.S. Dollars)* (Statista, 2020) stated “The total monthly benefits paid to unemployed people in the United States amounted to 2.68 billion U.S. dollars” (Statista, 2010, para. 1).

Unemployment contributes to long-lasting high health care costs, dependence on social programs, and obstacles when the economy attempts to recover (Lee et al., 2010).

An international study conducted by Evans-Lacko, Knapp, McCrone, Thornicroft, and Mojtabai (2013) showed similarities across multiple countries that the outcomes of the combination of rising health care costs and unemployment during an economic recession result in individuals being dependent upon social programs. In the international study, released in 2013, the authors found that unemployed individuals relied on social programs, such as unemployment insurance and disability plans, because of an economic recession (Evans-Lacko et al., 2013).

According to Drake et al. (2013), “People with psychiatric impairments (primarily schizophrenia or a mood disorder) are the largest and fastest-growing group of Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) beneficiaries” (p. 1433). For many years, the Social Security Administration (SSA) attempted to engage Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) beneficiaries in vocational rehabilitation and treatment programs to test the hypothesis that a comprehensive package of insurance coverage, mental health treatments, vocational services, and elimination of disability reviews might enable SSDI beneficiaries with psychiatric impairments to return to work. The SSA also wanted to know if this type of intervention would improve the individuals’ mental health status and quality of life (Drake et al.).

In 2005, the SSA launched a three-year mental health treatment study (MHTS) to test their hypothesis (Drake et al.). The MHTS used a randomized controlled trial design to test a multifaceted intervention. The MHTS randomly selected a sample of 2,059 SSDI beneficiaries who were diagnosed with schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or depression in 23 cities and who participated in the 2-year intervention (Drake et al.). The MHTS inclusion criteria included “being an SSDI beneficiary with a primary diagnosis of

schizophrenia or a mood disorder, being interested in gaining employment, [and] being 18-55 years of age” (Drake et al., 2013, p. 1434). The location of the study was an outpatient mental health clinic. Standard univariate tests (*t* tests and chi-square tests) were used to compare the intervention and control groups. According to Drake et al. (2013), “The teams implemented the intervention package with acceptable fidelity. The intervention group experienced more paid employment (60.3% compared with 40.2%) and reported better mental health and quality of life than the control group” (p. 1433).

The findings of the study by Drake et al. (2013) indicate that serious mental illness can be reversible. The suggestion of reversible mental illness could be linked to a team-based care intervention program when seeking to return to work or attaining employment for the first time. Drake et al. (2013) suggested, “Many people with serious mental illnesses such as schizophrenia and mood disorders experience long-lasting periods of stability while using currently available interventions, such as team-based care and appropriate medication management” (p. 1433). In addition, the authors recognized that “new vocational services, such as the individual placement and support model of supported employment, have demonstrated a robust ability to help people with mental illnesses return to competitive employment” (Drake et al., 2013, p. 1143).

Approximately 28% of the 8 million recipients of SSDI have psychiatric impairments, primarily psychotic disorders, such as schizophrenia and mood disorders, such as bipolar disorder and depression (Drake et al., 2013). Drake et al. (2013) indicated that “SSDI beneficiaries may be good candidates for an intervention that combines evidence-based treatments and employment services because they generally have a substantial employment history, which is usually a good predictor of future

employment” (p. 1433). Drake et al. (2013) posited that granting SSDI beneficiaries access to an evidence-based employment program and having them participate in the program would work to reduce social costs and reliance on public benefits. The MHTS reported that after using the program services, there was a surge in SSDI beneficiaries by way of workforce participation, more earnings, better self-reported mental health, and improved quality of life. Individuals in the intervention group used fewer services of all kinds, except for the outpatient mental health and vocational rehabilitation services that were the evidence of engagement in the intervention (Drake et al., 2013).

SSDI and unemployment insurance pay billions of dollars monthly to individuals, which has a financial impact on the economy. The SSA has attempted to help disabled individuals return to work by introducing SSDI beneficiaries to evidence-based employment programs (Drake et al., 2013). A major outcome of an evidence-based program model is its success in returning individuals to work (Drake et al., 2013).

Lack of Education and Skills

“Aging workers experience the longest unemployment spells of any segment of the labor force and are much more likely than their younger counterparts to drop out of employment entirely” (Lassus et al., 2016, p. 81). The literature suggests that there are barriers to aging workers rejoining the workforce. In order to better understand what those barriers are, from the perspective of aging workers, Lassus et al. (2015) conducted a qualitative study. The demographics were males and females, aged 40-65, living in Columbus, Ohio, who were out of work for more than 3 months due to a recent economic recession, but they were actively seeking work. Four barriers to reemployment were

revealed to include (a) ageism, (b) credentialism, (c) online job search methods, and (d) jobs being outsourced overseas (economic restructuring).

Ageism, as reported by the respondents, was what they experienced when an interviewer read their resume or asked them questions about adaptability on job interviews. Even though laws prevent employers from asking an applicant's age, Lassus et al. (2015) stated that "several of the respondents noted that employers have developed creative ways of finding out [their age]" (p. 84). Credentialism was the next barrier to reemployment. Lassus et al. (2015) stated, "Many of our respondents recognize that employers today prefer workers with college degrees and specific, extensive skillsets, even when hiring for positions that have not traditionally required these" (p. 85). The third identified barrier to reemployment was the online job search and application process. Lassus et al. (2015) wrote, "The shift from filling out paper applications—often in person—to applying online identified as disadvantageous for all job seekers" (p. 86). Finally, the last barrier was the outsourcing of jobs. Lassus et al. (2015) stated, "A majority of the respondents identify general economic restructuring processes includes neoliberal shifts that have accompanied globalization, deindustrialization, and outsourcing" (p. 86).

Researchers have suggested that building individuals' employability assists them in overcoming barriers (Koen, Klehe, & van Vianen, 2013). Employability refers to the qualities or soft skills an individual should possess to obtain and sustain employment (Koen, van Vianen, van Hooft, & Klehe, 2016). Some employability skills are adaptability, socialization, knowing what type of job or career is the right fit for the individual, and basic computer skills that match or exceed the technical demands of the

job. These skills, in addition to formal education, build the profile of a desirable job candidate (Koen et al., 2013).

Koen et al. (2013) found, in their study on employability among long-term unemployed individuals, that employability is the foundation of building a career and finding employment. The study conducted was a representative sample of long-term unemployed individuals in the Netherlands who initially were unemployed for 6 months, but job seeking intensely, and then reemployed 1 year later. The results confirmed that while there are barriers to reemployment, increasing employability could preclude long-term unemployment (McArdle et al., 2007). Employers are looking for a mix of skills, as well as education, in hiring the best candidate for a position. Employers do not want to spend time and money training staff on soft skills (Robles, 2012). Robles (2012) stated, “Employers want new employees to have strong soft skills, as well as hard skills” (p. 453). According to Robles (2012), the critical soft skills employers are looking for in candidates include integrity, communication, courtesy, responsibility, social skills, positive attitude, professionalism, flexibility, teamwork, and work ethic. Investing in training long-term unemployed individuals on soft skills is key to reemployment (Koen et al., 2013). According to Taye (2013), “Research has shown that education at any level could make significant contribution to poverty reduction” (p. 66). The Koen et al. (2013) research suggests that it is best for individuals, before they are unemployed, to enhance soft and hard skills to increase employability.

Health Problems and Unemployment

Short- and long-term unemployment has a direct correlation to poor mental health (Sage, 2017); specifically, depression (Kim & von dem Knesebeck, 2016). The longer an

individual is unemployed, the further mental health can decline. According to Daly and Delaney (2013), “There is a scarring effect of unemployment throughout adulthood on psychological distress at age 50” (p. 19). However, Daly and Delany (2013) considered that childhood psychological factors could contribute to long-term unemployment later in life. Daly and Delaney’s (2013) study observed unemployment over a 34-year period from 1974 to 2008 by age group. Participants were followed from ages 7, 11, and 16 and then from 23 to 50. The study found that if the participants had negative experiences, such as childhood emotional and behavioral issues between the ages of 7-16, they were more likely to experience long-term unemployment later in life. Moreover, because they may have experienced negative childhood experiences, by age of 50, psychological distress would increase as the participant aged. However, the actual results showed that although there was evidence that childhood mental health bears some significance on later-life long-term unemployment as a risk, childhood mental health was not found to be a cause (Daly & Delaney, 2013). Earlier research supported the idea that lasting childhood mental health factors resulting from negative emotional well-being and deviant behavior may contribute to an individual’s predisposition to consistent periods of long-term unemployment (Kokko, Pulkkinen, & Puustinen, 2000).

A European study, examining the need for employment in older age groups, found that when working conditions change in older ages, depression plays a major role in the health decline of an individual. The longer a person is unemployed or experiences job instability, the more likely he or she is to report signs of poor psychological well-being (Wahrendorf, Blane, Bartley, Dragano, & Siegrist, 2013). The study further concluded that employment, in general, has other nonfinancial benefits to individuals. Those

benefits include having a structured day, increasing one's self-esteem, and providing a sense of contribution to the work, cause, or mission. Employment increases motivation, interpersonal contact, cognitive skills, and positive changes in human behavior (Wahrendorf et al., 2013). Results from this study also suggest that job loss has a relationship to depression. The results further show that possessing wealth, such as a savings or retirement account, lessens the impact of depression; nonetheless, depression is associated with unemployment (Wahrendorf et al., 2013).

Riumallo-Herl et al. (2014) performed a research study in the United States and Europe "to examine whether late-career job loss increased depression among older workers" (p. 1508). Riumallo-Herl et al. (2014) designed a quantitative study that utilized longitudinal data drawn from the *Health and Retirement Survey* and the *Survey of Health, Ageing, and Retirement in Europe*. Workers aged 50-64 years, in 13 European countries and the United States, were assessed biennially from 2006 to 2010. Individual fixed-effects models were used to test the effect of job loss on depressive symptoms, controlling for age, sex, physical health, initial wealth, and sociodemographic factors (Riumallo-Herl et al., 2014).

The Riumallo-Herl et al. (2014) study also considered how wealth contributes to mental health stability during job loss in the United States compared to Europe. Older unemployed individuals in the United States experienced depressive symptoms at a higher rate compared to older unemployed individuals in Europe. Riumallo-Herl et al. (2014) stated that the disparity may be due to "social influences and socioeconomic inequalities" (p. 1514), as only 46-59% of older workers in the United States qualify for any unemployment benefits. In contrast, Europe offers all unemployed workers some

type of social benefit, such as unemployment insurance, unemployment assistance, or housing benefits. The deductive research approach results statistically supported the hypothesis that job loss has stronger effects on depression among workers in the United States, particularly for U.S. workers with little or no wealth.

Research has indicated that unexpected unemployment in both the United States and other countries has an effect on a person's mental health and on the economy (Dragano, Siegrist, & Wahrendorf, 2011). Differing social policies in various countries do not reduce the association between unemployment and depression. Older workers in the United States have very limited benefit options during long-term unemployment compared to older workers in Europe (Cazes, Verick, & Al Hussami, 2013). Research in Europe found similar connections between unemployment and mental health; however, the social policies instituted in Europe provide better social benefits to their citizens (Minas, 2014).

Missinne, Vandeviver, Van de Velde, and Bracke (2014) examined the connection between unemployment and depression among the aging population in Europe in comparison to the United States, using the EURO-D scale, a commonly used depression symptom scale for Europe, and the CESD-D, a self-reported scale designed to measure depressive symptoms in the general population for the United States. The EURO-D scale results showed there were significant negative effects of unemployment on individuals, whereas the CESD-D scale showed both the negative and positive effects of unemployment. One positive effect of unemployment relates to an individual deciding to attend school or become an entrepreneur (Thurik, Carree, Van Stel, & Audretsch, 2008).

Lassus et al. (2015) revealed there are three social-psychological consequences of unemployment: loss of trust, loss of identity, and isolation and depression. Many of the respondents noted a loss of trust in the traditional social contracts of employment. Companies had betrayed their hard-working, long-time staff because of financial cuts or unexpected plant closures. The companies had no loyalty to workers; therefore, it was easier to lay them off (Lassus et al., 2015).

The second consequence revealed in Lassus et al. (2015) was loss of identity. The respondents noted that many workers identified themselves by their work or occupation, but they felt unable to do so when they were no longer employed in that profession. Others, particularly the male respondents, felt shame at being unable to provide for their families.

The final social-psychological consequence from Lassus et al. (2015) was isolation and depression. A male respondent, aged 59, used to go out with friends to various events. Unemployment caused him grave embarrassment and resulted in not wanting to be social. A female respondent noted that it is lonely at home when everyone else is at work.

The association between unemployment and depression affects all age groups, but declining health among the unemployed is emerging as a consistent factor for adults (aged 18-25) and older (aged 50-65) who are long-term unemployed individuals (Crabtree, 2014). Researchers, McGee and Thompson (2015), hypothesized that depression affects 18- to 25-year-olds during unemployment, similar to older adults. McGee and Thompson (2015) analyzed a national survey from the *Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System*, an instrument used to assess health risk behaviors, and they

determined that unemployment among emerging adults (aged 18-25 years) poses a public health concern. Unemployment is a public health concern because of its association with the decline of mental and physical health (Virtanen, Janlert, & Hammarström, 2013).

According to McGee and Thompson (2015), “Depressive disorders are among the most common mental health problems. As a leading cause of disability, depression is related to reduced quality of life and increased risk for physical health problems” (p. 1). McGee and Thompson (2015) postulated, “Depression is higher among the unemployed than among the employed, but little is known about the relationship between unemployment and mental health among emerging adults” (p. 1). Through their research, McGee and Thompson suggested that there are multiple factors that contribute to depression, but that unemployment is consistently associated with high rates of depression. Public health concerns arose from this study because it suggests that unemployed emerging adults are a population needing increased mental health care (McGee & Thompson, 2015). While psychological distress is not specific to one age group or socioeconomic status, it has been shown that as the age of unemployed workers experiencing distress increases, so does the harm that can be done to their mental state. Warr, Jackson & Banks (1988) stated, “The association between length of unemployment and psychological ill-health was found to be strongest in the middle age groups, with greater ill-health among those with a longer duration since job loss” (p. 605). In addition, middle-aged individuals at a lower income level who are unemployed long term are highly subject to psychological distress. Drapeau (as cited by Caron & Liu, 2011; Myer et al., 2008; Phongsavan et al., 2006) stated, “Lower income and socio-economic status have repeatedly been shown to be a risk factor for distress” (p. 117).

The problem is that psychological distress hinders the job-seeking efforts of middle-aged, long-term unemployed persons because, according to Goldsmith, Veum, and Darity (1996), “Unemployment and joblessness are likely to influence an individual’s perception of personal efficacy, locus of control, and hence psychological well-being” (p. 333). Self-efficacy, or personal efficacy, refers to an individual’s belief in his or her capacity to execute behaviors necessary to attain specific performance goals (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997). The longer a person is unemployed, the more likely he or she is to experience loss of self-worth, negative judgment of skill set, and loss of desire to be part of the workforce. Daly and Delaney (2013) hypothesized that joblessness can scar an individual. Goldsmith et al. (1996) wrote, “As the duration of a current unemployment spell lengthens, the likelihood of holding beliefs of personal efficacy decline, therefore reducing opportunities for individuals to actively seek employment” (p. 333).

Individuals who experience depression as emerging adults (aged 18-25), and during their transitional period into adulthood, are more likely to have recurring depressive symptoms in adulthood. McGee and Thompson (2015) concluded, “While many emerging adults experience improved mental well-being during the transition to adulthood, numerous emerging adults experience depression during this time, especially those who are unemployed” (p. 5). If emerging adults do not seek mental health help, there is an increased risk of depression in adulthood (McGee and Thompson, 2015). In both emerging adulthood and adulthood, the risk of depression is higher among the unemployed than the employed. Unemployment can be a difficult event to an individual and coping with the effects of unemployment are sometimes unbearable (Linden & Rotter, 2019). The availability of mental health services during unemployment is crucial

to the well-being of individuals. Fryer and Fagan (1993) asserted that most unemployed workers cope with health issues on their own or with the help of family and friends as the result of unemployment. However, according to Rook, Dooley, and Catalano (1991), the stress of unemployment can lead to declines in the well-being of spouses, changes in family relationships, and changes in outcomes for children.

Vinokur, Price, and Kaplan (1991), of the Michigan Prevention Research Center, conducted a quantitative study (using a *t* test) in the lower east region of Michigan regarding how mental health intervention has significant benefits for unemployed individuals. Unemployed workers were recruited while waiting in line at state employment offices, and those interested in receiving an intervention were randomly assigned to a 2-week, eight-session experimental program or a self-guided booklet control condition. Of the 752 persons assigned to the experimental condition, 440 (59%) never showed up. Participants were those who attended at least one session (mean sessions attended = 6.2). The experimental program covered such topics as preparing resumes, using social networks to find jobs, learning problem-solving processes, and accepting social support. The outcomes included benefits both in becoming reemployed and on mental health variables such as anxiety and depression (Vinokur et al., 1991). When the participants' outcomes were compared with those estimated for the controls who would have participated, the results showed significant benefits for the participants in reemployment and mental health (Vinokur et al., 1991). Follow-up analyses suggest that the persons who needed the program most self-selected their participation (Vinokur et al., 1991). Further, Knabe and Rätzl (2011) suggested that older adults who remain

unemployed for longer periods of time believe they are unemployable, and those who have successfully gained employment are not secure in their jobs.

Care and a supportive environment are vital for the unemployed population, as they are vulnerable to mental health issues. Coventry et al. (2011) performed a qualitative in-depth, semi-structured interview study in the United Kingdom, focusing on the barriers to managing depression in people with long-term conditions (LTC) seeking primary care from health professionals. The participants in the study were 19 health care professionals drawn largely from primary care (clinical staff), along with seven service users (patients), and three carers. *Carer(s)* is a British term for a family member or paid helper who cares for a child or a sick, elderly, or disabled person (Barken, Daly, & Armstrong, 2017). Coventry et al. (2011) purposively solicited a diverse sample of stakeholders in order to bring about views on a wide range of barriers to the management of depression in people with LTCs. In the study, two diseases associated with depression, diabetes, and coronary heart disease (CHD) were examined in order to understand how these two diseases were identified and treated. The goal of the study was to better understand methods primary caregivers could use to diagnose factors associated with depression. By identifying those methods, researchers were provided with a greater understanding of how primary caregivers could use the same methods to diagnose and treat other diseases and factors associated with depression. The primary caregivers were able to identify depression, but they were unable to determine where the depression originated, thus causing a possible misdiagnosis. Compared to the primary caregivers, the carers articulated that even though depression is an understandable reaction to living

with LTC, the possibility of other factors that cause depression, such as social and economic disadvantages, should be investigated.

Coventry (2011) identified that “continuity of care is a key principle of general practice but thought to be especially important in managing people with long term, life-limiting illnesses” (p. 6). Coventry reported that the primary caregivers agreed that developing longitudinal relationships with patients could increase trust with patients that would allow for methods of identifying depression organically versus the more formal and sometimes intrusive screening. The patients’ responses to the barriers to managing depression in people with long-term conditions in primary care were simple: They want to be heard and not told they are depressed because they have diabetes or CHD. Instead, the study results showed that patients would like their primary caregiver and carers to collect data from them that would reveal their true perceptions about depression. Some patients reported that they did not like to disclose how they were feeling to their primary caregiver or carers. Contextually, it was apparent from Coventry’s findings that primary caregivers believe that patients perceive depression as a sign of weakness or as “letting themselves down” (p. 6).

The conclusion of the study by Coventry (2011) revealed that primary caregivers, carers, and patients addressed managing depression with LTCs differently. At the conclusion of the study, Coventry stated, “Improvements in the quality of care for depression in people with LTCs are likely to follow on from interventions and service redesign support and facilitate practitioners to engage patients in more collaborative management strategies” (p. 9). The study suggests that primary caregivers and their staff

start where the patient is in terms of needing care. Patients are seeking care management that includes their perceptions of depression (Coventry, 2011).

A clinical synthesis on the social determinants of mental health by Compton and Shim (2015) supported the idea that poor mental health, no matter when or if it happens, is related to unemployment. Social determinants are social factors, such as unemployment, poor education, unequal wages, high healthcare costs, lack of health facilities, and environmental risks, that independently or combined, can affect the mental well-being of a society. The lives of individuals who succumb to depression as the result of long-term unemployment are further complicated by their inability to combat social determinants (Compton & Shim, 2015).

Gostin and Powers (2006) posited that public policy needs to address these social determinants in order to reduce the severity of each one. Public policy sets forth the guiding principle that details action to be taken by state legislation on a particular social issue (Finer, 2018). As an example, public policy can review the mental health impact that unemployment has on society and then provide recommendations to minimize the issue (Thoits, 2010). Proactive measures may lead to decreased health care costs and dependency on social programs like disability benefits and unemployment insurance (Todman, Hricisak, Fay, & Sherrod, 2012). The findings of the clinical synthesis indicate that unemployment is a social determinant that public policy needs to address (Todman, Hricisak, Fay, & Sherrod, 2012).

Numerous research studies conducted in the United States and Europe have concluded that employment is one of the most important elements of stable mental and physical health. Employed individuals have better overall health, while unemployed

individuals have negative health consequences (Paul & Moser, 2009). Unemployment is a social determinant that leads to the decline in the quality of life and worsening of mental state. Having a job or career provides an important link between the individual and society and empowers individuals to contribute to society and achieve personal fulfillment (Allen, Balfour, Bell, & Marmot, 2014).

Return-to-Work Model(s)

In 1998, Congress passed the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), which replaced the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) as the single source of federal funding for workforce development and readiness (Bird, Foster, & Ganzglass, 2014). WIA was evaluated by the U.S. Departments of Education (USDOE) and Health and Human Services (HHS) and was shown, based on policy, community application, process, and outcomes, to be ineffective in meeting the needs of the community; therefore, it was redesigned in 2014 (Ladinsky, 2015). The new WIA is the 2014 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). WIOA VR is part of a suite of services offered at local CBOs in low-income communities. WIOA VR includes workforce development and readiness with an additional emphasis on adult literacy (Pickard, 2016). However, WIOA VR has low performance outcomes in achieving competitive jobs for individuals with disabilities and those without disabilities (O'Neill, Kaczetow, Pfaller, & Verkuilen, 2017).

Previously identified, competitive employment includes full- and part-time jobs with wages higher than minimum wage and comparable benefits (Saha, Bejerholm, Gerdtham, & Jarl, 2018). A study conducted to identify competitive employment outcomes differing across impairment groups and by demographics found that the rates of

competitive employment were lowest for individuals who participated in VR programs and who were blind or visually impaired (O'Neill et al., 2017). The rates of competitive employment were also lower for older clients, women, and individuals with other impairments such as mobility and low levels of education (O'Neill et al., 2017). O'Neill et al. (2017) gave recommendations to consider when designing employment service programs, which are the type of employment, the time of unemployment, the achievable competitive employment by impairment, and the demographics.

Over the past 20 years, researchers have conducted studies comparing traditional vocational rehabilitation programs to evidence-based programs, commonly called Individual Placement and Support (IPS) employment programs, to assess their effects on employment outcomes, job matching, and job sustainability (Drebing et al., 2012). Traditional vocational rehabilitation programs are designed to support individuals' return to the workforce by offering them job training and interview skills with the ultimate goal of helping them find work. Work provides not only a financial reward but also a sense of purpose and connection to society (Drebing et al., 2012).

Prior research has shown that unemployment leads to deteriorations in psychological and physical health; therefore, it is crucial that unemployed individuals return to work promptly (Carrier, Schuring, van Lenthe, & Burdorf, 2014). However, traditional vocational rehabilitation programs do not address the needs of individuals who are experiencing mental health issues. Carrier et al. (2014) performed a study to understand the "influence of poor health on job-search behavior and re-employment, and the mediating role of job-search cognitions and coping resources" (p. 1). The study

found that poor health must be addressed before an individual can successfully job seek and sustain employment.

The alternate SE model, known as IPS, targets individuals with mental health disorders. Drake et al. (2016a) described IPS as “an evidence-based vocational rehabilitation intervention for people with severe mental illness. IPS emphasizes client choice, rapid job finding, competitive employment, team-oriented approaches, benefits counseling, and ongoing supports” (p. 1). IPS, which is currently used in 23 U.S. states and four countries, shows competitive employment attainment of 56%, compared to the 23% of conventional vocational rehabilitation programs (Mueser, Drake, & Bond, 2016). Competitive employment has a positive impact on self-esteem, life satisfaction, and mental health symptoms (Luciano, Bond, & Drake, 2014).

According to Drake and Bond (2018), “Until the 1990s, no models were effective in helping people with serious mental illness get stable competitive employment. Even today, only 2% of people who could benefit have access to effective employment services” (para. 2). The IPS model is emerging, but according to Drake et al. (2016a), the current limitations on studies include “IPS modification, generalizability, program settings, international dissemination, cultural awareness, and supportive technology” (p. 1). In addition, studies are limited on the effectiveness of IPS because not all communities have the model available for participants (Rosenheck et al., 2017).

A study by Drake, Bond, Goldman, Hogan, and Karakus (2016a) suggests that evidence-based SE for people with mental illness is the best approach to helping individuals who are experiencing depression achieve competitive employment. Competitive employment includes jobs that are full time or part time with wages higher

than minimum wage and comparable benefits (Saha et al., 2018). The overall approach to IPS is client centered, whereas the traditional vocational program approach is job centered (Drebing et al., 2012). Drebing et al. (2012) recognized that there are gaps in traditional vocational programs in the areas of motivational interviewing and providing supportive clinical settings for specific populations that address cognitive rehabilitation, both of which are components of IPS models. The Drake et al. (2016a) study synthesized results comparing IPS with traditional vocational programs and determined that IPS increased employment levels three times more than traditional vocational programs and extended the length of employment and job tenure. According to Drake et al. (2016),

The evidence for superior competitive employment outcomes in IPS is robust and consistent. One review found nine randomized controlled trials in the US and showed that 65% of IPS clients obtain competitive jobs, compared to 25% of those who receive other types of vocational assistance. (p. 2)

International IPS results show that IPS participants achieved competitive jobs over those in non-IPS programs. In addition, IPS clients achieved their first job several months faster than those in other vocational rehabilitation programs (Evensen et al., 2017).

Drake et al. (2016) found that IPS SE is the most cost-effective approach for helping people with psychiatric disabilities find and maintain competitive employment.

The IPS approach has been recognized by the SSA, as the results from a large-scale demonstration study, involving over 2,000 SSDI beneficiaries, showed that IPS more than doubled paid employment. Policymakers should consider funding for the IPS program. Currently, IPS is funded by private or grant money (Whitworth, 2018). A study performed by Marshall et al. (2014) suggests that policymakers should create a

central funding source, similar to Medicaid, that will secure the sustainability of the IPS program. IPS has been a cost-effective program studied in over 20 clinical trials in 25 years.

The financial advantage of IPS is that it increases the opportunity for participants to work and reduces the amount of unemployment and/or disability insurance paid to participants (Marshall et al., 2014). Upon returning participants to the workforce, the use of social benefits declines. When unemployment surges, both state and federal governments pay eligible participants unemployment benefits. IPS program models, however, are not accessible to participants in all job-placement programs partially due to funding and limited research (Noel et al., 2017).

According to Marshall et al. (2014), the results across the literature on SE “consistently showed positive outcomes for individuals with mental disorders, including higher rates of competitive employment, fewer days to the first competitive job, more hours and weeks worked, and higher wages” (p. 16). The research revealed that 70% of people with a mental illness want a job, and 60% of people with a mental illness can successfully work when using SE services—if provided with the appropriate support. However, less than 2% of people in the public mental health system receive services from the IPS program. This is a large gap between the number of people with mental illness who want to work and those with access to IPS.

Despite the limited research, IPS, where implemented, has achieved favorable outcomes (Marshall et al., 2014). Recent research also has found support for the “zero-exclusion criterion, which encourages all consumers to participate in SE regardless of their current substance use, substance use background, or history with the criminal justice

system” (Marshall et al., 2014, p. 20). The presence of a substance abuse background was not associated with unemployment, but the results did indicate that exposure to the IPS model could help a participant obtain employment with on-site, condition-related services. The IPS model using the zero-exclusion criterion results in cost-saving and program success rates (Marshall et al., 2014).

The study by Marshall et al. (2014) was limited to adults with mental disorders or with co-occurring mental and substance use disorders. Marshall et al. posited that further research is needed to discover whether SE is effective for other populations, such as people with primary substance use disorders or traumatic brain injury and adolescents. Research also is needed to determine whether IPS is effective for specific subgroups, such as cultural, racial, or ethnic groups (Marshall et al., 2014). Finally, additional research is needed to determine the efficacy of central funding.

Based on the research, IPS is a cost-effective program and has a high success rate of helping individuals with mental health issues return or enter the workforce; 70% of people with mental health issues want to return to work, but they need guided support. IPS programs assist individuals in achieving employment and offer continued support after individuals achieve employment. However, funding and accessibility are barriers to participating in an IPS program.

Topics Analysis

Each of the identified studies in the review of the literature expounded on the connection between unemployment and mental health issues. Unemployment can have a negative impact on all age groups but particularly on older adults (ages 40-65). Unemployed persons, age not being a factor, have a higher risk of developing depression.

Depression is one of the main mental health diagnoses associated with unemployment, specifically long-term employment. Even though unemployed people may have mental health issues, many people with mental health issues want to work and can work. They can achieve competitive employment as a result of the emergence of an effective intervention, such as evidence-based SE, also called IPS. Evidence-based employment programs have been in existence for over 25 years and have been assessed in over 20 clinical studies, with results showing higher success rates than traditional vocation programs.

Communication among the care management team is critical to the success of a person receiving treatment at an IPS. Studies have shown that there is a risk that clinicians and other interdisciplinary team members, such as nurses, case managers, and primary caregivers, will not be able to communicate effectively with one another, making it difficult for clinicians to understand the needs of participants. Individuals with mental health issues could benefit from program services, but they often do not have access to these services because the services are not centrally funded by a government agency. IPS is primarily funded by private funders or grants. This limits the scaling to a greater number of the individuals in the community. The SSA has been seeking ways to engage SSDI beneficiaries to return to the work force. Many people with mental health issues want to return to the workforce but do not have support from a care management program. Helping individuals with disabilities to find work is not that different from assisting other persons with obtaining employment. The major difference for people with disabilities is that they require some support and assistance as they go through the job

search process, and some of the steps toward obtaining employment are planned according to their needs and possible limitations.

Mental health issues, such as depression due to unemployment, pose a public health risk to society. Apart from health issues, unemployment places individuals and their families in difficult financial situations. Individuals may not be able to afford their mortgages, life insurance, savings, and adequate health care, thus resulting in low self-confidence and self-esteem. Research has shown that unemployment for individuals ages 40-65 has an association with poor mental health, leading to mental illness and increased mortality rates (Noelke & Beckfield, 2014).

Unemployed individuals who do not have mental health issues need to return to work before poor mental health, such as depression, develop. A client-centered-approach employment program used in evidence-based programs such as an SE IPS, albeit for persons with mental health concerns, is principled as a holistic approach to reemployment. These programs focus primarily on understanding career interests, job matching, introducing entrepreneurial opportunities, building professional networks, addressing employment barriers, and offering postemployment support.

Chapter Summary

The literature review was a process of discovering the various researchers' findings on the association of long-term unemployment, specifically with older adults, and mental health issues. Included in the research were empirical studies that revealed the effectiveness of an evidence-based, employment-supported program called IPS, how SSDI and unemployment insurance continuously affect the economy, and how mental health has become a public health issue.

SE IPS programs have significant positive outcomes with assisting individuals in obtaining competitive employment. Essentially, employment for persons with and without mental health issues adds significant benefits to their lives, identities, and communities. The themes of employment benefiting persons with and without mental health issues should be considered in all employment programs. The studies show that participants gain self-esteem, self-worth, and better health with employment. These findings, which emerged from the literature, can be grouped into three main areas: (a) work has personal meaning, (b) employment reduces the financial impact on society, and (c) work reduces health issues.

SE IPS programs are an essential part of care management for unemployed individuals, specifically individuals experiencing mental health issues. Studies continue to emerge on SE IPS programs with the hope that SE IPS will become the recognized leader in employment placement programs.

Chapter 3: Research Design Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to elicit the perceptions of success from program administrators in low-income, urban CBOs regarding the effectiveness of the SE model used to service unemployed individuals aged 40-65 (older individuals).

General Perspective

Unemployed older individuals (ages 40-65) may benefit from an SE model that provides a direct, individualized approach to job search, job preparation, counseling, and career training (Campbell, Bond, & Drake, 2009). Even though SE models were influenced by mental health as an evidence-based practice to improve employment attainment outcomes for individuals with severe mental illness (Campbell et al., 2009; Kim, Bond, Becker, Swanson, & Langfitt-Reese, 2015), the model type is used across other organizations with participants being serviced in communities. According to Modini et al. (2016), the SE model “is an effective intervention across a variety of settings and economic conditions and is more than twice as likely to lead to competitive employment when compared with traditional vocational rehabilitation” (p. 14).

This study’s core research questions were:

1. What are the perceptions of success from program administrators at community-based organizations of the supported employment model for unemployed individuals ages 40-65?

2. How do program administrators, who utilize the supported employment model for their clients, define and measure success?
3. What, if any, improvement plan was identified by the program administrators for the model?

Research Context

This study took place in a large northeastern United States city in low-income, urban communities with five CBOs that service those communities. The interviewed program administrators of the CBOs all had an SE model as part of their offered suite of services. At the time of the interviews, these CBOs focused on tackling various identified social justice issues that impeded upon the progress of their urban residents. The program administrators of the CBOs that responded delivered numerous support services to individuals in the community, including employment programs. The program administrators of the CBOs were selected to be interviewed by purposive sampling for this study, and the CBOs participated in a city-funded program that connects unemployed participants to mental health services. Purposive sampling is a method used to extract a sample of a population to be part of a study based on the researcher's knowledge of the population, to gain a full understanding of the topic, which is based on the purpose of a study and research (Creswell, 2014). These organizations are vital community resources that offer support, such as employment services case management, mental health assessment and treatment, education support, health education, community resources, and recreation programs, to community residents.

Research Participants

The population selected were 15 CBOs within a large northeastern United States city in low-income, urban communities that offered the SE model and received additional time-limited funding to offer mental health support services to their participants. The researcher recruited potential participants by using a letter of introduction (Appendix B). The researcher set out to interview a minimum of five of the 15 CBOs' program administrators of employment services. With five respondents, that is one third of the population that was needed for the interviews in this case study to receive enough data before responses became repetitious and/or would not lead to more information relating to the research questions (Creswell, 2014). The recommended minimum number of interviews for a case study is between three and five (Creswell, 2014; Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, & Fontenot, 2013; Mertens & Wilson, 2018). The researcher anticipated that all 15 CBOs would respond to the study invitation; however, of the 15, three CBOs declined to participate due to not servicing the age population (40-65) focused on in this study. This left a remaining population pool of 12 CBOs. Of the 12 CBOs, one CBO declined due to their employment program not being an SE model type. The remaining 11 CBOs were continuously contacted via telephone and email over a course of 2.5 months. Of the 11 CBOs contacted, five CBOs responded favorably to the study. The total sample CBO program administrators interviewed was five, which became 45% of the eligible contacted population. The remaining population was contacted, but they did not offer a response via telephone or email.

The research participants from the five CBOs included, primarily, program administrators of the organizations who worked specifically in the SE program. The

sample that added voice to the study were staff members including program directors, employment specialists, job developers, case managers, and other program support staff.

Instruments Used in Data Collection

The data collection tools included semi-structured interviews (Shekhar Singh, 2014). The interviews served as the primary source of data in this case study. Interviewing was the only data collection method the researcher used to gather information to support the research (Yin, 2017). Obtaining proper insight from the interviews begins with capturing the experiences of the respondents who participate in the study (Yin, 2017). The interview protocol consisted of a semi-structured series of open-ended experience based on “what,” “how,” and “why” questions that present an opportunity for the respondents to provide in-depth responses (Yin, 2017). Semi-structured interviews have the components of both structured and unstructured questions. All participants in this study were asked the same questions with the possibility of additional questions being asked during the interviews to clarify responses or to expand on a particular area (Yin, 2003, 2017). Open-ended questions allowed the participants to respond naturally, thereby revealing their perceptions, opinions, and knowledge about the SE program (Shekhar Singh, 2014).

Procedures for Data Collection and Analysis

The researcher used a case study approach to collect data using semi-structured questions to gain an in-depth understanding of the program administrators’ perception of success (Creswell, 2014). The interview protocol consisted of semi-structured open-ended interview questions (Appendix A) that presented an opportunity for the respondents to provide in-depth responses about the SE model. Using semi-structured

interviews questions for data collection was best for this study because the researcher was able to elicit the perceptions of program success as spoken narratives from the existing program administrators (Creswell, 2014). Through qualitative data collection, the researcher and program administrators engaged in dialogs using semi-structured questioning, allowing the program administrators' perceptions to emerge instead of using a quantitative method that would provide conclusive statistical data (Creswell, 2014). However, after the initial interviews were analyzed and coded from the transcripts and recorded interviews, the researcher discovered an additional common theme amongst the five respondents. The researcher then requested a second interview with all five respondents to check for accuracy and meaning (also known as member checking) relating to the discovered theme (FitzPatrick, 2019). The letter of introduction informed participants about the study, how the program administrators could participate, and how they would receive the results of the study. Unemployment is a real-life experience; and, therefore, for purposes of this study, using a case study approach led to an in-depth understanding of the best practices and strategies from the program administrators' perspectives (Yazan, 2015).

Face-to-face interviews were conducted and via telephone conference with the program administrators. The informed consent form (Appendix C) was emailed to the participants 5 days prior to the date of the interviews. The informed consent release language was reviewed at the beginning of each interview with the respondents. Copies of the informed consent form were made physically available at the interviews in case the consent forms were not be received prior to the interview date.

The researcher used an Apple iPhone with the Rev.com app downloaded to audio record the interviews and took handwritten notes during the interview process (Mertens & Wilson, 2018). The interviews lasted for at least 60 minutes. The voice recording data from the interviews were transcribed using Rev Translation, a transcribing service based in San Francisco, CA and Austin, TX, as the transcribing service. Using Rev.com's secure encrypted password-protected platform, the researcher sent the audio recordings to Rev.com for transcribing. The researcher received the transcribed files through the same secure platform using an encrypted password to retrieve the transcribed files.

All data collected are kept on a password-protected laptop that is locked in a filing cabinet in the researcher's private home. The filing cabinet key is kept always with the researcher. No one else has access to the laptop or filing cabinet. All digital audio recordings and transcriptions of the interviews are maintained using a private, locked, and password-protected file and password-protected computer stored securely in the private home of the principal researcher. Electronic files include assigned identity codes and pseudonyms; they do not include actual names or any information that can personally identify or connect the participants to this study. Other materials, including notes or paper files relating to the data collection and analysis, are stored securely in unmarked boxes, locked inside a cabinet in the private home of the principal researcher. Only the researcher has access to the electronic or paper records.

The data analysis process included using interview data to establish codes, categories, and themes that revealed similar or the same concepts. After the codes, categories, and themes were established, a review was performed to ensure the researcher determined an accurate depiction of the data (Creswell, 2014; Mertens & Wilson, 2018;

Yin, 2014, 2017). The researcher read the entire data collection multiple times to become familiar with the interview content collected (Mertens & Wilson, 2018). The researcher solicited a research assistant for intercoder reliability to assist in analyzing the researcher's codes from the data (Creswell, 2014). Intercoder agreement was established; the research assistant discovered additional codes and arrived at the same and similar initial conclusions as the researcher (Creswell, 2014; Michael, 2018). With intercoder reliability established, codes, categories, and themes were placed in a data table, using the final concepts to write a summary report of the findings, with direct quotes from respondents that support the study findings (Creswell, 2014). Predictable results and findings would be evident should a reasonable person decide to replicate this case study using the same methods and selected age group with different subjects (participants) (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2014, 2017).

Positionality

According to Coghlan and Brydon-Miller (2014), positionality refers to the “stance of the researcher in relation to the social and political context of the study—the community, the organization or the participant group” (p. 1). At the time of this study, the researcher did not have a professional or personal connection to the CBOs or the program administrators. The researcher was not unemployed directly before or during the study. However, the study context was in a large urban city in low-income, urban areas. The researcher was raised in a low-income, urban area and was unemployed while living in that low-income, urban area. The researcher, at least four times, experienced unemployment as a career professional, lost health insurance, and collected unemployment benefits.

Dissemination

After the research study and defense was completed, the dissertation was published on the St. John Fisher College dissertation repository and made available online. The researcher shared a de-identified summary report of the study findings with participants. The de-identified dissemination of the study findings preserved the privacy of the research participants and their organizations. The study results may be presented at conferences, seminars, and workshops for educational and information purposes.

Disposition of Data

All data and information retrieved from the interviews, such as taped recordings, informed consent forms, and handwritten notes will be kept by this researcher for a period of 5 years following publication of the dissertation. The signed informed consent documents will be kept for 5 years after publication. All paper records will be cross-cut shredded and professionally delivered for incineration. The electronic records will be cleared, purged, and destroyed from the hard drive and all devices such that restoring data will be not possible.

Chapter Summary

This case study design explored the perceptions of program administrators at CBOs regarding the SE model used for unemployed individuals. This study also included exploration of the participants' perceptions of the effectiveness of the program for participants aged 40-65 and job attainment outcomes for this group. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews, the data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify themes across the different data sets that supported the description of the unemployment phenomenon. Procedures for collecting data were semi-structured

interviews using open-ended questions. The interviews were conducted in person at the CBO or via telephone conference. During the initial interviews, a theme emerged amongst the five program administrators. The researcher requested a second interview with all five participants to check for accuracy and meaning (also known as member checking) relating to the discovered theme (FitzPatrick, 2019). Dissemination of the results was through a de-identified summary sent to the study respondents and all data collected were kept in accordance with St. John Fisher College guidelines and federal regulations. Data collected will be disposed of in accordance with St. John Fisher College guidelines and federal regulations.

Chapter 4: Results

Research Questions

The purpose of this case study was to elicit the perceptions of success from program administrators in urban CBOs regarding the effectiveness of the SE model used to service unemployed individuals aged 40-65 (older individuals). The participants of this study were the program administrators, with insight from their staff, such as employment specialists, job developers, case managers, and other program support staff. Established from the research questions, program administrators were asked a series of semi-structured interview questions that served as a guide in the data collection plan, to elicit their perceptions of success as it relates to the SE model.

The interview questions were developed from the reported success and limitations of employment models such as individual placement and support and work readiness (Bird et al., 2014; Drake et al., 2016a; Mueser et al., 2016; O'Neill et al., 2017). The theoretical frameworks that guided this study were resilience theory, adult learning theory, and the psychoanalytic theory of psychosocial development. Resilience theory is defined as being able to adapt during adversity, trauma, tragedy, or stress (Cicchetti & Garnezy, 1993; Garnezy, 1991). Likewise, Ledesma (2014) further suggested resilience is the “ability to bounce back from adversity, frustration, and misfortune” (p. 1). Considering resilience is the ability to come back from adversity and misfortune, in this study regarding success perception of the SE used with unemployed adults (ages 40-65), a common theme was the need for work-related skills training and adult education. The

Knowles (1989) adult learning theory explains that adults are ready to learn based on their interests or to learn a skill that will help career or work advancement. According to Knowles (1989), adults become eager to learn when there is an immediate need to have a skill or be able to perform a skill more efficiently. Additionally, the study utilized Erik Erikson's (1959, 1966) theoretical frameworks of psychosocial development, also known as lifespan developmental theory, that has eight stages of development, especially, generativity versus stagnation. Generativity versus stagnation focuses on middle adulthood (ages 40 to 65 years) when individuals establish their careers, settle down within a relationship, begin their own families, and develop a sense of being a part of the bigger picture (Erikson, 1959, 1966).

The research questions to direct this study were:

1. What are the perceptions of success from program administrators at community-based organizations of the supported employment model for unemployed individuals ages 40-65?
2. How do program administrators, who utilize the supported employment model for their clients, define and measure success?
3. What, if any, improvement plan was identified by the program administrators for the model?

Research Question 1. *What are the perceptions of success from program administrators at community-based organizations of the supported employment model for unemployed individuals ages 40-65?* Each program administrator spoke about what their perception of success was using the SE mode—not just with this specific age group—but using the model as a whole, across all age groups. In their explanation, the model

addresses the participants' needs relating to obtaining and sustaining employment, using data-driven tools (quantitative and qualitative) to assess outcomes, and they each continually discovered innovative ways to collaborate with employers in their communities to maintain relationships for securing employment for participants. Included in their perception of success was keeping the focus on the participants' milestones, connecting with participants by meeting the participants where they are in their challenges to obtain and sustain employment. Four of the study program administrators acknowledged that some of their program participants face behavioral health (mental health) challenges and had discovered a city-funded grant to connect participants to mental health services for support. The mental health issues identified were depression or related to having a hard time finding employment, and then the participants in the SE program give up on finding employment. As for SE model participants' ages of 40 through 65, two program administrators recognized that there are challenges with ageism, digital literacy, and education levels. Two program administrators shared that they do not track success necessarily by age but by how many people have found, and are able to sustain, employment. Overall, each program administrator agreed that the SE model does offer a holistic approach to providing services to their participants that address all areas of their lives.

Research Question 2. *How do program administrators, who utilize the supported employment model for their clients, define and measure success?* Each program administrator used metrics to define and measure success. The program administrators collectively defined success of the model by evidence-based results, community partnership, community engagement, program sustainability, recognized

challenges, and continuous evaluation. The program administrators shared that they use a quantitative and/or qualitative type tool (CBO specific and/or funder specific) that indicates job attainment outcomes; participants achieving objectives and milestones; and resource allocations, such as staffing ratios, skills, and education level assessment of the participants. Two program administrators indicated that they use surveys to understand the opinions of the participants regarding how the program is helping or not helping them, gain an understanding of how the participants feel about their experience, identify other services or programs the participants would like to have, and to ascertain areas of improvement based on the participant responses.

Research Question 3. *What, if any, improvement plan has been identified by the program administrators for the model?* All the program administrators identified areas for continuous improvement. Without taking away from the employment model as it was used in their CBO, the program administrators shared improving program effectiveness to help participants gain employment and to offer support to those experiencing behavioral health issues. Three program administrators identified new interview techniques and strategies, such as Internet-based (Skype) interviewing, seeking employment in neighboring counties, and offering in-house job experience. These strategies, according to the program administrators, help participants become familiar with new-age technology, gain employment opportunities in different locations, and become viable candidates for employment. Although the research questions nor the interview questions asked about the mental health of the participants, the program administrators informed the researcher, during the interviews, about mental health services for participants. The researcher asked about improvements to the program model, and mental health

organically emerged as a needed support for the participants. All five program administrators, as part of their improvement plan, had social workers on staff that assess clients who need connections to mental health referrals for the appropriate level of care and assist in providing on-site crisis intervention where a crisis is occurring. Another area of improvement noted between the program administrators was relationship building. With employment being the main goal, the program administrators held the program staff, such as employment specialists and job developers, accountable for creating and cultivating relationships with potential employers, along with understanding trends and patterns of the job market to better the chances of the participants being placed in in-demand jobs. Three program administrators added in motivational interviewing, which is a program-retention technique used to engage clients in job searching strategies. Three program administrators specifically identified education (skilled trades and traditional education) as definitely one of the means of employability. As an improvement for job attainment outcomes and sustainment, two of the three program administrators assessed education levels, and then worked to seek employers who would accept candidates with less than a high school diploma.

Data Analysis and Findings

To elicit the perceptions of success from the program administrators in the urban CBOs regarding the effectiveness of the SE model used to service unemployed individuals ages 40-65, the program administrators were asked a series of semi-structured interview questions. In total, five interviews were conducted at urban CBOs located in a large northeastern urban area in New York State. Before the data analysis and findings are explained, a de-identified description of each CBO is provided.

Description analysis. A de-identified description of each responding CBO is provided to introduce the community-based, nonprofit organizations by summarizing their geographic location, their size, provide an overview of their population, and the services they offered. For the purposes of this study, the size of a CBO, according to GuideStar (Frailey, 2017), means an organization's composition-based annual budget. GuideStar, an Internet-based reporting source that categorizes and displays financial data, derived from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) business database about nonprofits, describes nonprofit budget composition ranges. Nonprofits with an annual budget of less than \$5 million are categorized as a small CBO composition. GuideStar further categorizes CBOs with annual budgets greater than \$5.1 million but less than \$10 million as mid-sized, and those with budgets greater than \$10.1 million as large CBOs (Frailey, 2017). To construct the descriptions of the CBOs, the researcher used written recorded notes taken during the interview at each CBO and information from each CBO's public website. After the de-identified description of each responding CBO and program administrator, this chapter will provide a synopsis of the data analysis, study findings related to the research questions using the semi-structured interview questions as the data collection tool, and a summary of the study results.

At the time of this study, the five CBOs were from large urban areas located within the northeastern region of New York State. The CBOs are nonprofit groups that work in local urban communities to improve the lives of community residents. Services and programs found in CBOs include health care information and awareness; age-specific programs, such as affordable daycare, teen programs, and senior day programs; education resources; access to technology; and access to spaces and information for the disabled.

Communities represented by these CBOs are typically disadvantaged or impoverished neighborhoods (Chandra et al., 2013).

CBO A: CBO A is a large government- and privately funded organization that has been serving a low-income community for 20+ years. With over 200 staff members, CBO A has been able to continue the mission of collaborating with economic partners and community members to offer social services such as healthcare, public assistance, education resources, financial literacy, seasonal tax preparation, and job-placement resources. CBO A has served over 20,000 people in their community throughout its 50 years. CBO A's participants are predominately African American and over the age of 18. CBO A is a well-respected organization in the community with residents in the community, political figures, community partners, and funding sources. CBO A has been able to expand their services with continued financial growth from government grants and private donations.

Program Administrator A: Program Administrator A has been with CBO A for more than 2 years. However, Program Administrator A worked in the social field in various roles with other organizations that had employment programs. Program Administrator A was able provide a detailed account of prior government-type policies and legislation on returning-to-work models by cross-referencing successes, challenges, and implications of such that affected the community participants. Program Administrator A manages the staff and budgets for the employment program. Program Administrator A, in previous experience and in CBO A, has performed program reviews on the delivery of services and assessed outcomes that included financial impacts on budgets. Program Administrator A has also implemented strategies for improvement.

Program Administrator A has an advanced degree and intends to remain in the social services field. Program Administrator A was well versed in the history of CBO A and the SE model program.

CBO B: CBO B is a large government- and privately funded organization that has been serving a low-income community for 20+ years. CBO B's original mission was to help community residents secure a prosperous future by assisting them with a collection of services from housing, employment, public assistance, personal advocacy with crises, and support during those crises. Currently, with over 100 staff members and interns, CBO B still lives out their mission, offering pertinent services to their community members. These services still include the original collection of services with enhancements, based on participant needs, such as education services, legal services, domestic violence assistance, and seasonal tax preparation. CBO B's participants are predominately Hispanic and over the age of 18. CBO B is a respected organization within the community with political figures, funding sources, and community partners.

Program Administrator B: Program Administrator B has been with CBO B for 5+ years. Program Administrator B is part of the senior leadership at CBO B. Program Administrator B began working with SE models at CBO B. However, Program Administrator B had previous experience managing and auditing social services programs. Program Administrator B is well versed in public policy, economics, and speaking with government officials about social services concerns. Program Administrator B manages a staff comprising case managers, care coordinators, social work interns, employment specialist, entitlement specialists, and job coaches. Program

Administrator B is responsible for the program evaluation and budgeting for the employment program.

CBO C: CBO C is a small government- and privately funded organization that has been serving a low-income community for 20+ years. CBO C's mission was to help community residents obtain suitable employment to reduce poverty within the community. The emphasis over 20 years ago was on resume writing and interviewing. Currently, with more than 100 staff members, CBO C continues to live out their mission of serving in excess of 5,000 participants, offering pertinent services to their community members. These services still include employment assistance with enhancements such as job sustainment strategies, post-employment follow-up, education resources, and job-specific training. CBO C's participants are predominately non-White and over the age of 18. CBO C has won recognition awards for their work with participants on job attainment and sustainment. CBO C is a respected organization within their community, with political figures, funding sources, and community partners.

Program Administrator C: Program Administrator C has been with CBO C for more than 2 years. Program Administrator C has been in the social services field and public advocacy for over 10 years. Program Administrator C is responsible for oversight of the SE model program and other support programs such as skill-based training and case management. Program Administrator C oversees the staff within the SE program and conducts program evaluations for continuous improvement. Program Administrator C is well versed on matters relating to social injustices, public health, community needs, and political landscapes.

CBO D: CBO D is a large multistate **government and** privately funded organization that has been serving low-income communities for over 20 years. CBO D's mission over 20 years ago was to help community residents obtain suitable employment, and education and skills training to reduce poverty, homelessness, and recidivism within the community. At the time of the interview, with over 100 staff members, CBO D continues to live out their mission, serving over 7,500 participants and offering pertinent services to their community members. These services include employment assistance with enhancements such as job sustainment strategies, post-employment follow-up, education resources, internships, and job-specific training. CBO D's participants are returning citizens from incarceration and over the age of 18. CBO D is a respected organization within their community, with political figures, funding sources, and community partners.

Program Administrator D: Program Administrator D has been with CBO D for more than 2 years. Program Administrator D has only used the SE at CBO D. However, Program Administrator D had experience working in the social services field with various populations including returning citizens. Program Administrator D will remain in the social services field.

CBO E: CBO E is a mid-sized, **multistate government and** privately funded organization that has been serving low-income communities for 20+ years. CBO E's mission over 20 years ago was to confront unemployment and poverty in its community. Currently, with over 100 staff members, CBO E continues to carry out their mission serving in excess of 50,000 participants, offering pertinent services to their community members. These services include employment assistance with enhancements such as job

sustainment strategies, post-employment follow-up, education resources, internships, and job-specific training. CBO D's participants are predominately African American and over the age of 18. CBO E is a respected organization within their community, with political figures, funding sources, and community partners.

Program Administrator E: Program Administrator E has been with CBO E for more than 7 years. Program Administrator E is part of the management team and oversees the employment division at CBO E. Program Administrator E is responsible for the development of new programs, program delivery, reporting, budget review, and evaluation. In addition, Program Administrator E manages a staff comprising data analytics, case managers, job coaches, employment specialists, education, and job-skills training. Program Administrator E is also responsible for fostering positive relationships with government officials, program funders, and community partners. Program Administrator E is well versed in various employment programs, has extensive knowledge in workforce development, and has developed and implemented strategies for continuous program improvement.

Each responding CBO have embedded into their missions to strengthen neighborhoods by addressing the immediate needs and concerns of their residents, serve as a resource and a partner to their communities, bringing together nonprofit organizations, financial institutions, employers, community constituents, health partners, and government funders to successfully continue to build their communities. The program administrators who are responsible for the employment services in their respective CBO presented as qualified career professionals that possess knowledge and competencies to manage SE models at their respective CBOs. The program

administrators are responsible for managing the employment programs and administering the supporting the SE model. They are fiscally responsible for the budgets, for conducting program reviews, implementing changes, and managing staff.

As discussed, the data analysis and findings provide an in-depth understanding of the perception of success according to the program administrators of the SE as a whole.

Cross-analysis of program administrator interviews. At the completion of all five interviews, data collected during the initial interviews were cross-referenced for common themes. It was determined that there were seven common themes with 27 subthemes that were collapsed from 33 original codes (Appendix D). These seven themes helped tell the stories of the success related to the SE model used in their CBOs from the perceptions of the program administrators in this study. The seven initial themes were (a) participant outcomes, (b) outcome indicators, (c) funding, (d) success measurement matrixes, (e) improvement/strategies, (f) challenges, and (g) anecdotal information. However, after the initial interviews were analyzed and coded from the transcripts and recorded interviews, the researcher discovered another common theme amongst the five program administrators. The discovered theme was that the SE model used at their CBOs did not capture job attainment and sustainment outcomes, education, skills competency, and/or employment challenges data by age group; specifically, the 40-65 age group. The researcher requested a second interview with all five program administrators to check for accuracy and meaning related to the discovered theme (FitzPatrick, 2019). The second set of coding from the follow-up interviews resulted in two additional themes with two corresponding subthemes from four codes. The follow-up themes were (a) data by age and (b) mental health. All five CBO program

administrators responded to the second interview. Table 4.1 offers an overview of the initial themes and subthemes.

Table 4.1

Initial Identified Themes and the Frequency of Subthemes in Participant Interviews

Themes	Subthemes	% of Program Administrators Who Discussed Subthemes
Participant Outcomes	1. Attaining and sustaining employment	100
	2. Pre- and post-employment assistance	
	3. Lifetime help	
	4. Participants can come back to the programs for additional help and resources	
	5. Programs offer coaching, guidance, advice, and training referrals	
Outcome Indicators	6. Assessment of participant milestones in the program	100
Funding	7. Program administrators want to do more and give more	80
	8. Services will be eliminated or reduced by lack of funding	
	9. Lobbying for more funding	
Success Measurement Matrix	10. Data points on participant job attainment	100
	11. Milestones in the program	
	12. How well the program is marketed to population/ community	
	13. Surveys to participants	
	14. Outcome evaluation is ongoing	
Improvements/Strategies	15. Funding	100
	16. Use data to identify job loss and create additional prevention interventions	
	17. Work with participants through some of their identified barriers	
	18. Work directly with employers to understand their needs	
	19. Reviewing the achievability of the program and interventions goals and objectives	
Challenges	20. Internal struggles	60
	21. Lobbying for additional funding	
	22. Minimum wage jobs	
Anecdotal	23. Unemployed participants over age 40 could be faced with discrimination and ageism	100
	24. Lack of computer skills	
	25. Lack of education	
	26. Company culture assimilation	
	27. Some participants face mental health challenges	

Table 4.2 offers an overview of the second themes and subthemes discovered.

Table 4.2

Second Identified Themes and the Frequency of Subthemes in Participant Interviews

Themes	Subthemes	% of Program Administrators Who Discussed Subthemes
Data by Age	Outcome data for employment is not captured by age, specifically, ages 40-65	100
Mental Health	Unemployment and depression	100

Theme 1: Participant outcomes. All five of the program administrators had established goals and objectives that were monitored by either specific outcomes, such as job attainment and sustainment, on a weekly, biweekly, or monthly basis. Although an actual internal or external tool used to evaluate outcomes was not disclosed, each CBO had a defined process of ongoing monitoring and evaluation. Each program administrator disclosed that they evaluated performance and outcomes through an internal, structured, and systemic approach, providing an objective assessment of the areas that require improvement, enhancement, or development relating to the SE model.

The CBOs conducted required timely reviews of the model to ensure contract, funder, and agency compliance, in addition to internally monitoring the SE model outcomes. Program Administrator B, Program Administrator C, and Program Administrator E stated that they might conduct internal audits outside of the CBOs' normal monitoring schedule if undesirable outcomes or patterns are discovered to identify immediate areas of improvement. Program Administrator B, relating to continuous improvement stated, "Okay, as an organization, here's what we see. We can

make improvements and not taking away from the model, but to add value to it.”

Program Administrator C, relating to continuous areas of improvement stated,

Measuring our wellness and digital literacy outcomes, so like, how many people are we screening, you know, [related to emotions and thoughts of learning] moderate to high in areas of depression and anxiety, how are they doing? How are people doing differently when they’re coming in with low digital literacy, competency versus high, and what’s their growth over time? So, we’re a really data-driven organization, um, we’re always, you know, it’s a work in progress, you know, especially [CBO composition] as you probably know. To get everyone trained with tools and techniques, but it’s important for us that we’re running programs that, that work. Not just finding data to prove our model, but to like, use it to iterate and continuously improve.

Subtheme 1: Attaining and sustaining employment. Each CBO agreed that participants attaining, and sustaining employment is the goal of their SE program. Program Administrator A stated, “Without employment, poverty continues.” The program administrators, to help participants achieve attaining and sustaining employment, collaborated with internal departments and external resources. These collaborative efforts included housing providers, case management, and mental health professionals to ensure referrals and linkages to housing, health insurance, food pantries, clothing banks, mental health providers, trainings, and employment programs. Additionally, internal resources offer skill-building groups, which include effective resume workshops, interviewing skills, computer-based job search techniques, employment application assistance, creating reference lists, financial education,

workforce readiness, and recreational activities. Program Administrator A, Program Administrator B, Program Administrator C, and Program Administrator E stated that continued refreshers in budgeting, skill building, and work readiness help participants sustain employment, and they strengthen their confidence. Program Administrator B, stated, relating to training or new trainings skills,

This is all just brand new to them [adult populations], and it serves as almost like a hindrance. And just like, “I don’t want to do this. It’s much easier for me not to work or not to apply for a job,” and I was just wondering like, what type of outreach that we do here, in terms of just supporting those folks and saying, “Okay, well, let me show you how to do a resume. Let me show you how to interview.” Before they actually just go there. Because some of the traditional programs, they just do resume skills, and then they say, “Okay go.” And it’s all like, “Well no, I don’t know, what are some of the interview questions?” So that, to me, is really like a wraparound type of program, yeah.

Program Administrator C stated, as it relates to work refreshing skills and work readiness,

Some of our students in the age group you described either were in a field for a long time, or maybe have been out of the workforce for a while and are not, up to speed on the skills and requirements that, you know, the 21st century labor. But I think, another thing that we’ve found is digital literacy needs.

Subtheme 2: Pre- and post-employment assistance. All five program administrators had built into their SE models a mechanism that supports the program participants attaining jobs and supports the program participants after employment has

been achieved. Each of the program administrators recognized that it is not enough to just secure the job. Program Administrator C, Program Administrator D, and Program Administrator E completed employment assessments, which included a conversation with each participant to determine the participants' current experience, skills, and areas of interests. Based on the results of the assessment, the participant is best matched with employers who require the participants' education, skill level, and interest. To gain an understanding of the needs from employers, staff in the program, such as employment specialists, pinpoint current and future employment demands and trends and patterns of the job market. Program Administrator C, said,

Sometimes it really is sort of career shifting, and some of our classes focus on How do you think about what's next, what are your transferrable skills, whether or not you're past job is outdated or you're just looking for a change.

Staff, as described by the Program Administrator E, "continuously build employment resources and develop relationships and linkages with potential employers and training services."

From the program administrators, when participants achieve employment, they are always welcomed back to the program to share success stories and to take or retake workshops. Program Administrator B, Program Administrator C, Program Administrator D, and Program Administrator E had success stories posted on the CBO B, CBO C, CBO D, and CBO E websites.

Program Administrator B, relating to celebrating and recognizing success of participants, said,

So, when we see that a client has made some kind of progress, those are our victories. Once someone gets the job, then they come back, and they tell us they got the job. We celebrate that. When they get a promotion, we celebrate that. If they were [using a drug(s)] 7 days a week, and now it's 4 days a week, we celebrate that.

Program Administrator E said, "We want to hear success stories. We have past participants present and honored for their success." Each of the program administrators had a protocol that allowed for follow-up, ranging from 3 months to 1 year after job attainment that included checking in on how well the job was going, understanding, if any, what are some of the challenges the participants were facing on the job or in their personal lives, in attempts to help the participants sustain employment.

Program Administrator A sought to provide "skills upgrades and career advancement" resources to participants after securing employment. Program Administrator A said it is, "important to have [skills upgraded] to remain employable." Program Administrator D had a 30-day to up to a 1-year follow-up plan with participants after securing employment to provide job retention support.

Subtheme 3: Lifetime help. As identified in Subtheme II, participants are welcomed to come to the CBOs for a host of support and services. The CBOs do not close the relationship once the participant secures employment. All program administrators stated that participants are always a part of the CBO, and they serve as a resource to not only the participants but also to their families and the wider community the CBO is located in for support and services. Each CBO had been around for more than 20+ years within their communities and had plans to remain a vital resource to the

community and community partners. There were discussions of expansions from CBO A, CBO D, and CBO E, in other states, based on the services needs assessments conducted in those areas. Program Administrator D said, “we’ve expanded our supported employment program to [another area] due to the need in that area.”

Subtheme 4: Participants can come back to the program for additional help and resources. As stated in Subthemes II and III, participants are a part of the CBO for life. The program administrators recognized that some areas of employment are difficult, such as participants understanding basic knowledge of employment labor laws and understanding employer policies and rules. All of the CBOs in their population of participants serve returning citizens (formerly incarcerated). Program Administrator C, relating to returning citizens, identified “employment being of utmost importance to reduce recidivism.” Program Administrator D had an internal program that teaches participants how to be a successful employee on the job by allowing them to “intern in CBO D to gain work experience before they go into the workforce.” Both CBO C and CBO D encouraged “returning citizens” to develop or enhance their skills, which can lead to a successful reintegration into the community and job market. Each CBO had partnerships with clothing vendors for participants to get suitable work clothing. After employment is secured, the CBO staff use a counseling component with the participants that demonstrates support and assists them with gaining confidence in their current and obtained abilities; helps them analyze on- and off-the-job problems and find solutions; helps them in applying their current and obtained skills; and work through their fears about reentering the workforce.

Subtheme 5: Programs offer coaching, guidance, advice, and training referrals.

The SE model used at each CBO, according to the program administrators, is designed for participants who have an interest in reentering the workforce, but they may lack basic skills, confidence, and/or motivation to take the necessary steps toward employment, as well as the participants who are employable or employed who need support and coaching. The CBOs have also recognized that mental health is a barrier to attaining and sustaining employment, so they have trained staff that are able to identify mental health needs. Each program administrator has identified unemployment as a factor in poor mental health. Program Administrator B said, “Participants become depressed when they cannot find work or [they] can’t earn enough money to take care of their families. Sometimes they can’t even buy a cup of coffee.” Be it depression or isolation, the program administrators have a keen sense that unemployment plays a role in poor mental health. Program Administrator C, in discussing mental health as a barrier to finding employment, said,

Like, if you’re being evicted from your house, or you’re struggling to feed your kids, or find childcare, those things are major stressors that manifest in their mental health, and also impact their ability to really focus on the job search.

CBO C is not a mental health program but offered services if mental health is an identified need, the staff are able to help participants or refer participants to mental health community partners for support. Program Administrator C said that when discussing a participant who was having a difficult time on a job, “we were able to connect [person] with a number of different services. But it was because of the training that staff have and

the services that we have available that we were able to kind of pick that up and put [person] back together again.

For training, the CBOs provide participants with general math skills, reading and writing skills, job preparation, computer literacy (basic and advanced), resume writing, interviewing skills, conflict resolution, work etiquette, computer-based job search techniques and job retention assistance. All five CBOs, as part of their SE models, offer common onsite workforce training programs, such as Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) training for construction jobs, and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) job training for indoor/outdoor circulation equipment jobs, food services/food handlers jobs, clerical/administrative assistant positions, horticulture, solar installation, janitorial training, and customer service training courses. Program Administrator A said the “OSHA and HVAC classes are very popular for participants.” The CBOs each described techniques to help participants stay motivated and engaged while in the training programs while searching for employment. Some of those techniques identified are in-class, real-life budgeting for a project. Program Administrator E used the CBO’s OSHA and construction class to “allow participants to plan a project from start to finish using the materials they have and to stay within budget” approach. The thought behind this approach, according to Program Administrator E, was “on the job, they will have to learn to use all allocated resources efficiently.”

Theme 2: Outcome indicators. Five of the program administrators had milestones and timelines for completing their milestones based on the goals and objectives of the SE model with input from the participant. As a holistic approach to obtaining employment and meeting specific identified milestones, these milestones and

timelines are discussed with the participants and kept as part of their employment-achievement profile. The program administrators all recognized that it is important for participants to have realistic milestones that participants have a say and buy-in to these milestones.

Subtheme 6: Assessment of participant milestones in the program. The CBOs all agreed that milestones are those abilities or skills a participant can achieve within a timeframe. Part of the assessment of participant milestones, as identified by the CBOs, is knowing if the milestones are realistic, achievable, and measurable. Milestones are assessed by when and how a participant begins working toward that milestone. With the ultimate goal being able to achieve and sustain employment, an example of a participant milestone, indicated by Program Administrator A, is “understanding financial literacy.” The expectation is that the participants will participate in financial literacy training, and by the end of the training, use those techniques to know and explain the differences between “having money under a mattress, a bank account, and a check-cashing place” according to Program Administrator A. Program Administrator D said, “literacy has been identified as a major challenge for some of the participants gaining employment.” Program Administrator D said an example of an employability milestone in their employment program would be to “have participants increase their reading abilities by a certain time and then assesses any barriers if the milestone was not achieved.”

Theme 3: Funding. Three of the five responding program administrators expressed major concerns around the need for additional and the continuation of funding for the SE model and the additional mental health component of the model. Program Administrator A, when discussing expanding the program and additional ways to

distribute information about their SE program, said, “Some things that we noticed that seemed to be quite successful, and we want to try to push them more and get more funding for it. But just things like [event types], the community can take advantage of.”

Program Administrator A disclosed that, on whole, CBO A successfully manages their budgets and properly uses and distributes resources and funds. However, Program Administrator A still relied heavily on government funding.

Program Administrator B commented that the government program that helps fund the mental health portion of the SE model and is used to identify the need of mental health services and is used to train, attract, and sustain staff with expertise in this area, along with connecting participants to mental health services, is fearful that they cannot continue those services if funding is lost. Program Administrator B, when discussing funding for the program and its services, expressed,

When you have these grants that come out for a [population] or a specialized need, but then when the funding is over, and there’s no sight of it being done again or another RFP process for you to reapply to shows the success of the program, which shows numbers that say this actually helped this community.

Program Administrator B had unofficial information that the program funding will soon end and a new funding stream for the mental health portion will offer less funding. This is a major concern for Program Administrator B. Program Administrator B had been lobbying for more funding, more support services, and relying on fundraising efforts that can be used to fund services.

Program Administrator C, when discussing how to communicate the need for more government funding by showing meaningful the SE model program has been to

participants, and how the services add value to the community said, “actually funding non-profits at the level that could change the way we deliver services.”

While all five of the CBOs have government funding, each CBO is concerned with reduced or lack of funding, and they are seeking ways to maintain funding for services should there be a reduction in government funding or funding ends.

Subtheme 7: Program administrators want to do more and give more. The CBOs all expressed the want and need to do more to help participants in all areas of their programs. Specifically, in the SE program model to help participants be employment ready. The program administrators identified services and entitlements that included program-funded transportation cards to get participants to interviews and to the job at least for the first month, access to operational food pantries, the ability to employ professional and licensed staff who have experience servicing the needs of participants in areas of homelessness, mental health, substance uses, and reentry programs, specifically in the employment-based programs, such as more skilled case managers, social skills trainers, vocational trainers and development, crisis management staff, health, and wellness education and support.

Subtheme 8: Services will be eliminated or reduced by lack of funding. The responding program administrator were all concerned about funding and how lack of funding hurt participants and people in the community. The program administrators all acknowledged that unemployment rates are higher in urban areas and especially for disenfranchised members of the community. Without funding, the community suffers. The CBOs serve as a place filled with resources and opportunity for advancement for people in the community. The consensus amongst the program administrator is that the

SE model gives participants hope that they can get a job or training. During an interview at CBO A with Program Administrator A, the researcher observed that the CBO's main phone line was constantly ringing for the free OSHA training. Callers were told the class was full and to call again in the next month for the next class. OSHA training is not free, but with the funding provided for job readiness and skills training, it is free to those in the community and participants.

Subtheme 9: Lobbying for more funding. Program Administrator B, in particular, stated that they have gone to the government to lobby for more funding across the agency. Funding usually ends after 3 years, and the CBOs have to reapply for the funding data to support the need for funding. According to Program Administrator B and Program Administrator E, government funding has been poured into infants, school-aged children, adolescents, and young adults up to the age of 25. Program Administrator B, relating to funding for participants over age 25, said, "There's just not a lot of value put onto people after they turn 25 with the assumption being you've had 25 years of public services and you screwed it up." The CBOs experienced a decline in funding for persons after age 25 and for support-based programs such as employment programs. Program Administrator E said, relating to over age 25 funding, that funding after age 25 and especially for employment services geared toward older adults in preparing participants to enter or reenter the workforce "has been significantly reduced." Even though CBOs identified securing and maintaining stable employment barriers, such as homelessness, poor mental health, physical health, and financial stress for older adults (40-65), the funding focus is on younger aged groups.

Theme 4: Success measurement matrix. All five of the program administrators stated they closely review and evaluate program-specific subjects and trends including: (a) program performance, (b) outcome measures/retention, (d) caseload reviews, (e) staff vacancies, (f) participant participation and interest (g) employer contact (h) support groups, and (i) staff training. The CBOs also measured their performance by industry standards and best practices. The CBOs performed self-evaluations by reviewing these subject areas and trends for continuous improvement. The program administrators agreed they were able to, without taking away from the original SE model, create and/or initiate program improvements for success. Program Administrator B noted, specifically, that it was important to “recruit and hire qualified staff in a timely manner to avoid staff burnout.” The consensus amongst the program administrators was if staff have too many participants in their caseload, participants would lack proper support and engagement from their case manager or employment specialist. The program administrators informed the researcher they also reviewed budgets with spending and purchasing that were in line with program and funder guidelines. Program Administrator C said they created an “in-house tool that matches interest to skill.” For example, if a participant is interested in demolition work, he or she may have the innate skills but lacks the formal skills to obtain employment as a demolition worker, the tool is used to help the participant connect their interest to a “training program and union jobs” in the area that can offer continued on the job training. The program administrators’ use of performance improvement and best practices allow them to develop processes and procedures that ensure the accurate recording of the participants receiving services at the CBO and ensure timely completion

of employment assessments by the staff. Staff caseloads are also reviewed for efficiency and effectiveness in the services provided.

Subtheme 10: Data points on participant job attainment. As described by the CBO program administrators, they are required to report to funders the data based on job attainment and sustainment. Program Administrator E said this data “is housed in either a funder data base or [it is] internal databased for program performance.” The report captures data relating to how many participants achieved employment, what type of job was secured, which referral services were used, which industry/sector is the job located, and if the job is a union-based job. Program Administrator C and Program Administrator D agreed that union jobs for participants in urban areas are in high demand due to the “job protections against layoffs, has promotion structures and pay increases.” The data report also captures participant milestones, job retention, participants’ satisfaction with the CBO providing support and skill building and follow-up services. Participant surveys are another source of data captured by the CBOs to understand the needs of the participants in order to design and implement better services.

Subtheme 11: Milestones in the program. All of the CBO program administrators agreed that they have performance indicators built into their SE model that measure success of the model. The indicators of success, which have been narrowed down by the program administrators to be assessed are level of participation, job attainment, program performance, and participants completing training programs. As of the researcher’s interview, the CBOs have not lost funding to inadequate services nor have been placed on a performance improvement plan. Three of the five CBO program administrators disclosed they received support and administrative oversight from the

executive level at their CBO to ensure the model and program's success. Program Administrator E said, "Leadership understands the challenges of a supported employment model"; however, Program Administrator B said that sometimes leadership lacks cohesion on urban topics and therefore, "leadership is competitive to a point that they miss the important issues."

Subtheme 12: How well the program is marketed to population/community. The CBOs are all well established in the communities they service. Community residents have the opportunity to come into the CBO to ask questions about the various programs, services, and training opportunities. Program Administrator C and Program Administrator D have standing partnerships with the Department of Corrections because they service returning citizens. Program Administrator A used the "local community centers and community events to market the supported employment model program to residents." More marketing of the model, according to Program Administrator A is needed, "as poverty is very high in the urban neighborhood CBO A services." The Program Administrator A said, "lack of employment and lack of education continues poverty." Program Administrator A has incentives such as "gift cards for participants who successfully complete training programs and job readiness preparation courses." Program Administrator A makes every effort to market the model and program to get "residents to a place of self-sufficiency instead of relying on government entitlements that are not enough to support their needs." From all of the CBOs, the supported employment model program is marketed to everyone in the community and to adolescents who are out-of-school, legally employable youths, seeking vital skills to obtain employment.

Subtheme 13: Surveys to participants. As stated in Subtheme 10, CBOs use participant surveys to capture data that helps in understanding participants' needs to design and implement better services. The survey results also help CBOs know what other resources are needed to request for additional and future funding. Program Administrator B, related the resource barriers and funding for resources disclosed by the participants who want to come to the program, said,

Yeah, definitely. It's that golden question when they try to join to the program. They ask us if we provide them with MetroCards, and it's an obstacle. So, if there are no MetroCards available, it's so, like, they won't come to the program now. They can't really get to the program.

Program Administrator B continued to state,

And when we ask for feedback, they're always talking about MetroCards, or if they don't show up sometimes, it's because they don't have MetroCards. On occasion, we'll see people biking here from all over the place. So, sometimes they're able to work it out. But it really sucks that in order to participate in a program, they have to be going home and asking someone else for a favor in order to be able to come.

Program Administrator C, relating to improving the program based on participant feedback, stated,

The culture is that we have centers for the student always. So, literally, everything is about meeting the student[s] where they're at and making sure that they're successful. And so, you know, as we start to standardize some of the programs and some of our services, based on feedback and it's like making sure

that there's a blend of, "Here's what we know works," and also creating space for the relationship building and the one-on-one sort of counseling and support that needs to happen to meet the unique challenges of any particular individual. So, that's like, been a lot of feedback, so like how to balance those two things that you need, you need structure and to be able to evaluate models, but also, be responsive and flexible.

Program Administrator D, regarding feedback and participant surveys, said, "We also elicit feedback, but ultimately based on our programmatic outcomes and the number of individuals who achieve them, is how we measure whether we're having an impact and achieving success for the individuals that we serve."

Subtheme 14: Outcome evaluation is ongoing. The responding program administrators agreed that outcomes in the SE model are constantly evaluated for success. Outcomes are closely monitored for successful implementation and normally re-evaluated 5 months to 1 year to ensure that the delivery of services results in successful and positive participant outcomes. If deficiencies appear in the evaluation of the outcomes, the CBOs seeks to correct deficiencies with measurable action steps and timetables that ensures that the deficiency does not recur, lessening the deficiency, identify other areas within the program that may have been impacted by the issue and monitor the issue. Program Administrator A, relating to program evaluation said that, "We have to report to [funder name] and upper management how well the program is doing. We have meetings with the funder program managers that ask for outcomes and review our areas of improvements." Program Administrator B, related to reporting program outcomes, said, "We have our own internal database where we're checking

information, and then we also enter information directly into a number of funder-based databases. This helps us to stay on target with the funder expectations.

Program Administrator C, relating to program outcomes and evaluations, said,

We do measure progress in a variety of different ways, and we utilize [database], so all of our staff are trained on that, but we're measuring all sorts of, inputs and outputs to get us to those final outcomes, so we're always aiming to be on target with our program outcomes.

Program Administrator D, as it related to outcomes and innovation, said, "Yes, there are innovation initiatives throughout the organization to further support our model and how we deliver services. [In-house] initiatives having ongoing improvements, not set, in stone but ongoing to see how it's working.

Theme 5: Improvements/strategies. Each of the program administrators disclosed that they have established, developed, and implemented internal systems that have helped in identifying the needs of the participants and to improve/enhance outcomes and services that are delivered. The CBOs conduct participant surveys that measure participants' satisfaction with the SE model, the staff, and the training and job assistance services. Survey results are used to encourage discussions with staff, leadership, and funders to identify and implement program improvements or enhancements. Other used strategies, identified by Program Administrator D, is the integration of "motivational interviewing and cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) techniques that help participants facilitate a change in thoughts and behaviors about employment and the job search process." With the support of a trained staff person, Program Administrator D's strategies and techniques used in CBT typically help individuals during a challenging

event, to establish positive thoughts and changes within themselves to foster better outcomes, offers techniques to work through fears and anxieties, and create positive lasting behaviors (Hazlett-Stevens & Craske, 2004).

Program Administrator C and Program Administrator D agreed that motivational interviewing and CBT strategies are essential to helping participants navigate through their own fears and anxieties that are part of attaining and sustaining employment. Program Administrator C, Program Administrator D and Program Administrator E have implemented motivational interviewing (MI) techniques, which help participants work toward employment goals. Motivational interviewing helps participants work toward decision-making, gain self-control and restore confidence by stimulating positive decisions and accomplishing established goals (Papova, 2020).

The five CBOs also use coaching techniques that allow staff to work with participants on achieving and sustaining employment. Program Administrator D used an “in-house-developed then and now approach to identify areas of growth for the participants” when seeking employment. Program Administrator A said that securing “quick jobs” is a strategy that often fails because the urgency in just obtaining a job lends to participants becoming unemployed or underemployed. Underemployed, identified by Program Administrator A and Program Administrator E, is a when participants have skills in a certain area but are unable to secure employment in that area, so they accept two minimum wage jobs just to make ends meet.

Subtheme 15: Funding. The program administrators stated that funding is a great concern. Funding for staff training or evaluation tools is pivotal to the success of the SE model. When staff are properly trained to use motivational interviewing or coaching

techniques, those skills can assist participants in achieving their employment goals and work more effectively with the participants to be successful in sustaining employment. Program Administrator A, relating to funding, said, “Funding is always important. It’s how we run our programs. Not that we are lacking in funding, but you don’t want to lose funding.”

Program Administrator B, related to funding and training, said,

I think when we talk about increased funding, I think most of us imagine it going heavily to the clients and also to our employees’ salary line, so that we can keep qualified people, because we just cycle them out every couple of years. This is a great place to come in after college and cut your teeth. I’m proud when someone leaves us for something better because we developed them to that point. But that’s what I’m getting at, which is that we need opportunities for our staff to be trained.

Program Administrator B continued, relating to funding, said,

We’d like to be able to do more thorough job readiness with folks who are just coming in for a straight job placement. But, we can’t, because there’s just not the funds for the staff. And for that reason, we’re able to cream that population a little bit. So, we’re, I’m sure we’re losing a lot of folks who are in, within this population, because we are able to kind of be picky and say we’re going to take the folks who we can get into jobs faster. So, in that way, we do have to kind of, you have to check your conscience a little bit and recognize that’s not the mandate of this funding. We’re supposed to be helping the folks who are the least capable,

who are the least able to help themselves. But none of us have jobs if we don't have those outcomes. So, it's a little bit of a tradeoff.

Program Administrator C, relating to funding, said,

Employment programs are expensive to run. We are always proving costs [to] the [government funder] to prove that staff and these things and services, while expensive, are necessary to get the change you're looking for. And that's a challenge, in a [organization composition] that isn't, like, flooded with data analysts [analyze program data] and resources to do that kind of work . . . like, how do we prove the costs of a model, that makes meaningful life change for, for participants? We are only able to help those that are legally able to work in the US.

Subtheme 16: Use data to identify job loss and create additional prevention interventions. In their data collection process, the CBOs capture information about job loss, which helps them to understand why job loss occurred, and what type of intervention services are needed. Program Administrator C noted that job loss is different for everyone but there are “common trends amongst urban communities.” Some of the trends identified with losing employment in urban areas, which are combined responses from the program administrators, are listed in Table 4.3.

With these identified reasons for job loss in urban areas where the CBOs service, the CBOs have identified intervention services to help participants through these obstacles. All of the CBOs have connections with legal services to help with navigating through the legal system, housing evictions, and loss of entitlements due to wages exceeding, sometimes by one dollar, over the poverty line. Program Administrator B had

in-house legal staff to work with participants on legal issues such as “evictions and criminal history review.” Program Administrator D had in-house counsel who reviewed “criminal history and helps protect participants rights against employment discrimination practices.” Program Administrator A described the “loss of entitlements when a participant secures employment is a detriment to the participant.” The detriment is the salary or hourly wage is not enough to pay high rent and buy healthy food, let alone take care of childcare fees. The CBOs have connected with neighboring community partners to assist with mental health issues, substance abuse, and child/elder care needs. As it relates to unemployment, the program administrators identified internal resources and community partners to address mental health needs.

Table 4.3

Program Administrators Identified Job Loss and/or Unemployment Reasons

Program Administrators Identified Job Loss and/or Unemployment Reasons
Applicant background (criminal) history
Family caretaker needs
Loss of entitlements
Lack of education and skills
Lack of social skills
Lack of conflict resolution skills
Lack of finances to get to work; work is far from home
Homelessness/eviction
Poor time management
Substance use
Poor mental health
Higher paying jobs require degrees
Low wages; unable to pay rent

Program Administrator A, when addressing the mental health needs of participants said,

We even have now, [a] component that helps people that may be dealing with emotional, mental issues, what have you, so that, “okay, listen, maybe you need care based on me,” it doesn’t have to be that you have a psychological issue.

Program Administrator B said,

The [city] started to recognize the need to offer mental health services a few years ago. And this organization really saw that need and understood the importance of it. So, we applied for and got a [funding] to bring mental health training to our direct service staff people and also mental health services for community. That [funding] is about to [expire]. And [service] is part of the model.

Program Administrator C had “Licensed mental health counselors on site” to assist with the mental health challenges of the participants. Program Administrator C recognized that poor mental health was a barrier for the participants returning to work because of either previous challenges or existing challenges with societal issues. The program administrators have identified persons in their organization to train participants on social skills, conflict resolution techniques, and job readiness, which includes segments on time management. The CBOs have also connected with government officials to encourage minimum wage increases because the cost of living has risen. Program Administrator B when discussing minimum wage said, “Housing and food costs have increased but wages have not caught up to the rising costs.” The program administrators agreed that all of these interventions require continuous funding to be successful.

Subtheme 17: Work with participants through some of their identified barriers.

The CBOs have expressed that participants have barriers to successfully attaining and sustaining employment. Identified barriers from the program administrators, based on the participants' collective stories, are listed in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4

Participants Identified Barriers to Employment

Participants Identified Barriers to Employment
Criminal background
Passing a drug screening
Using digital technology to apply for jobs
Work history
Long gaps in employment
Lack of education/skills
Childcare
Housing/homelessness
Feeling down or bad because of not finding employment
Poor mental health

Using a global approach, the CBOs have used participant barriers to identify services that seek to relieve all, if not some, of barriers. Some of those identified services are established professional relationships with background-friendly employers, partnered with neighboring rehabilitation facilities or having those services on site. The CBOs offer digital literacy training (computer skills), resume writing skills, mock interviewing, job training and workshops, and dressing for success and effective job searches techniques. Using a holistic approach, the CBOs also offer initial employment assessments that encourage participants to participate in determining what type of employment they want, and the CBO counsels them with the choices that would best fit

their skill set and interests. Staff at the CBOs using the SE model are knowledgeable about the job market and are able to, realistically, guide participants to jobs that not only have openings but also fit their skill set, interests, location, and schedule. The CBOs have collaborated with local mental health support agencies to refer participants for services should CBO staff identify mental health needs. The CBOs have identified local licensed and registered childcare centers to help working participants with childcare needs.

Subtheme 18: Work directly with employers to understand their needs. The responding program administrators, overall, identified employment, mental health, education, skills, and income as the social factors of health that are pivotal to the overall health and wellness of the communities they service. Program Administrator E, said, “To enhance the success of the employment model, the CBO E staff form relationship partnerships with employers to create employment opportunities by understanding the needs of the employer.”

The responding program administrators said their employment staff contacts employers to understand what their hiring needs are, such as education and skills needed; hourly rate for jobs (entry level and skill trades); open position information, such as key responsibilities; and location of in-demand jobs.

Subtheme 19: Review the achievability of the program and interventions goals and objectives. The responding program administrators recognized that a significant component to the SE model is job attainment and retention. To help participants with employment strategies, the program administrators agreed that assisting in removing obstacles and barrier for participants to be successful in their employment takes

knowledgeable and skilled staff. The program administrators agreed that measuring achievement is looking at the outcomes to determine if the CBO is meeting the needs of the participants. This is why the CBOs constantly review their SE models to make sure they are on the track for success. Program Administrator A actively attempts to reach residents in the neighborhood at “local gatherings to attract them to the program.” The attempts have been achieved, but the results were not favorable because, according to Program Administrator A, “some residents were more interested in the activities than learning about the program.” Nonetheless, Program Administrator A and their SE model program did gain updated exposure in the community and they discovered that new attraction strategies can be formed. Program Administrator D used “quantitative data to show participation in job readiness and in training programs.” The remaining CBOs use a mixed approach of quantitate and qualitative data to understand if the goals and objectives are being met.

Theme 6: Challenges. Each program administrator recognized that there were some internal and external challenges to their SE model program succeeding.

Subtheme 20: Internal struggles. The program administrators collectively agreed that other programs serve as internal referrals for participant, such as entitlements, housing, and training and that each require funding. Program Administrator B noted that “when one program lacks funding, it poorly affects the employment program, thus fostering internal competitiveness for funding.” Program Administrator B said there are “internal competing interests because other program funding is also important.” Program Administrator B, said CBO B “finds itself seeking funding for all programs that they say are all really important.” Program Administrator B said, “We go to our elected officials

and we say this program is really important.” However, “we’ve got a long list of programs that are really important.” Program Administrator A and Program Administrator E echoed a similar response that government funding is great until the funding is completed and then you have to rely on unrestricted funds or funds from fundraising. Often times, unrestricted funding, also known as monies, are not connected to a direct program type, and in-kind gifts or funds from fundraising are not enough to keep the program running successfully. Program Administrator B said, “They are unfunded in a lot of areas and it makes it hard for us to do what we do.” Program Administrator A informed the researcher that sometimes internal leadership struggles with balancing funding for certain programs. Program Administrator B said with this struggle for funding, they are truly “invested enough to prove our model works” to secure more funding.

Subtheme 21: Lobbying for additional funding. Without enough funding, the employment model programs, and other supporting programs suffer. Program Administrator B disclosed that they have lobbyists on staff to support the plea for funding. Program Administrator B informed the researcher that the opportunity to go lobby for additional funding is sometimes a challenge because of staff shortages within the program. Therefore, as a leader of a program, the Program Administrator B “spends time on [social media] doing advocacy.” Program Administrator A informed the researcher, related to advocacy, to make improvements or outreach other people in neighboring communities into the SE program said,

Because when you’re doing this, you always have to think about what you’re not doing or what’s needed to drive a certain demographic of the population into the

doors. Why are we getting this group and not that group? Why more people coming from [urban housing development] than coming from another development that we working with? So, I would say, there's always consistent improvement plans that we have in place. One thing that we're trying to work on is our engagement. How do we build trust, have more trust with the community? How do we practice better engagement? What engagement tools do we have to get more people through the door? Some things we noticed seemed to be quite successful and we want to try to push them more and get more funding for it. But just things like holiday parties, the community can take advantage of [it].

Subtheme 22: Minimum wage. Another challenge shared by the CBOs is participants securing minimum wage jobs. Five of the program administrators recognized that minimum wage in their location is low and is not enough to support the needs of their clients. However, the majority of the clients do not have any higher education or the skills needed to ascertain jobs that pay more than the minimum wage. Program Administrator B said of their program,

So, oftentimes, when it comes to average wages, the majority of the people, you have minimum wage people. The majority of the people that come through the door, they're seeking survival jobs because they don't have a level of experience to do anything else.

Program Administrator D informed the researcher that earning minimum wage is particularly problematic with returning citizens to the community "because lack of money or the inability to not be able to pay rent or supply their basic needs can lead to recidivism." Program Administrator A said, "Ultimately, minimum wage even in [city]

at this moment does not provide people with a quality of life.” Program Administrator B explains that, “In my heart of hearts, I go to bed at night knowing that we are not making the impact we think we’re making because we’re putting people into minimum wage jobs.” Program Administrator B volunteered a real-life example encounter with a participant,

If it wasn’t for the government raising the minimum wage, so at one point it was \$7.25 and went up to \$9.00 an hour. At one point, when I was in this field, I had a [gender] who had a child and told me point blank, “\$9 an hour, I can’t pay my rent.” So, I said to them, “Take the job, get your foot in the door.” [Gender] said, “That’s not the point.” The matter is I need a roof over my head for me and my [child]. \$9 an hour is not cutting it.” So, now the minimum wage is [an amount] and it’s still not cutting it. And we’re the cutting edge because every single state does not come close to where we at right now.

Clearly, Program Administrator B was very passionate about how minimum wage affects clients and their families. Program Administrator B further explained in a very stern voice, regarding how unemployment and earning minimum wage affects a participant’s mental health. Program Administrator B eagerly explained that,

Also, mental health has a big impact in our profession. If they don’t have the resources, per se, to help them get along, we lose them in some shape or form, because then they have an episode, or they’re not getting the proper treatments or whatever the case may be. We try to do as best as we can to move them along, but if you’re not getting the proper care in order for them to be successful, we will lose them as well. I mean housing, everything else that comes with the book, but

mental health is another issue that has not been really addressed. We just try to do the best we can. We're going to send them out here, he's going to do well, and then he'll call the employer saying, he had a total meltdown. And then those things don't go away once they get on the job, and then they get fired because they're calling in all the time. Right. Or, look, the paid family sick leave thing is wonderful in New York, but employers are sketchy. So, when the minimum wage went up, a lot of employers started cutting hours.

The responding program administrators, on minimum wage, all concurred that it is not enough to support individuals and families. The program administrators also agreed that participants seeking higher salaries need education and/or skill trades. However, according to the program administrators, due to lack of education and skills, the starting point for many participants in these urban areas is minimum wage.

Theme 7: Anecdotal. The researcher discovered that, while the topic of this study is to elicit the perceptions of success from program administrators in urban CBOs regarding the effectiveness of the SE model used to service unemployed individuals aged 40-65, during the interviews, the program administrators were not specific about the prescribed age group in the study. However, there were recognized opportunities relating to the 40-65 age group that is included in this initial analysis.

Subtheme 23: Unemployed participants over age 40 could be faced with discrimination and ageism. When the researcher specifically asked about SE model program data around this age group's (40-65) employability and any limitations for such, the program administrators provided reflective responses. According to Program

Administrator A, relating to the employability of participants age 40-65, the response was,

How do you reenter the workforce after you've been out for a certain amount of time? You may have worked for 25 years, lost your job, but it's more difficult because the job that you had for 25 years required this. But now if you reenter, you're required to have other things, to be in the field. How does that field look? And what does your transferable skills look like? Those questions that you see for a lot of that population, they have to ask, but nobody poses them to that question because a lot of us, we know a lot, but we have to make sure that we have a clear understanding of how this system works. The older generations may not be as savvy with social media, email, those things, and they need to be reeducated on it. And part of that issue is that they have to want to know or have the desire to learn these things because they need them to work.

Program Administrator A, in a concerning manner, further stated, relating to transferable skills and interests,

So, those are some of the things that we work on, and it tries to provide those holistic approaches to make sure that, especially people in a certain age bracket, because when you're 40, you have more years behind you than you have ahead of you, you're in the middle. Right? But it doesn't mean that life stops. And I think oftentimes people believe that they're too old to pursue dreams and aspirations. I know people When I was getting my undergrad, there were people in class with me that were 60 something years old; that's when they had the time to go. Right? So, [it] doesn't matter. But we want to make sure that we can convey that

to the community. We can be that. Listen, as long as you have the ability, the physical ability to have the mental attitude, you can pursue your dreams at any age.

Relating to limitations, Program Administrator A explained that,

Some of the limitations may be that the majority of the jobs you get may be things that, that [a] group faces, because there is age discrimination. It's not a secret. It's not a secret, but that group may be marginalized because of a lot of those jobs, because you have a lot of entry-level jobs [that] may be with retail and a lot of return now. Not that they're not people in that age that do retail, but a lot of the retail now is they want young people because of the high turnover. And you want people to work fast and quick; whatever. So, they have people that they, they want to have you lift this, and some people at a certain age, they may not be able to do 50 pounds like that.

Also explained by Program Administrator A for the age group of 40-65 with degrees, the SE model is not attractive to this age group because,

I think back to the type of jobs that they may look for from time to time, oftentimes they feel that, because we may promote certain jobs that, "Well, I have a degree, I have an advanced degree. I'm older with children, and I'm not working at Starbucks or whatever." And I think they look at, because we're promoting that job order, that we can't help them own the job that they look for.

Program Administrator A summed up the response from that age group with, "there is a misconception that the SE cannot help them find employment." Program Administrator B said about this age group, 40-65, employability and limitations to

employment, that, “We have young adult programs and adult programs and within our adult programs, we’re not making any distinction as it relates to age. So, all of this is what we would do across the board.” Program Administrator C said, about this age group, 40-65, employability and limitations to employment, that,

We serve adults 18+, so, you know, we, we recruit sort of anyone 18 and older who’s looking to get back to work. And so, we certainly serve individuals in that age category. Limitations Just making sure that we’re able to adequately portray their past experience, whether it’s professional [skilled trade] effectively on their resume, so that those transferrable skills and experiences really help build their candidacy; I think a lot of our students struggle with that.

Program Administrator D said of the limitations for the age group of 40-65,

Specific to that age group? I mean I think, for our staff, and it’s nothing unique in particular, but having someone who’s working with them as a case manager, helping to facilitate their progress to improvement. I think our staff would say that’s critical. Meeting regularly with the same individual over the course of their participation in our program, up to and including the services that they receive after having achieved certain milestones.

Subtheme 24: Lack of computer skills. All of the CBOs have digital literacy as part of their training services, and it is available to all participants. The CBOs each test participants to assess their digital literacy skills, and where deficiencies are identified, offer additional support to increase the skills. The responding program administrators each agreed that digital literacy is a challenge for individuals aged 40-65. This is a major challenge for this age group because every aspect of the world is digitized. With the 40-

65 age group, three program administrators acknowledged that that age group might not be familiar with the online employment application process.

Program Administrator B stated that for this age group, 40-65, challenges around computer skills relates to,

A lot of discouragement among people within this age group for seeking employment because of the digital literacy gap, which is not something that we're addressing . . . especially to the mature population that they've been in a job maybe 20, 30 years, and suddenly they are either didn't know that the rules are different now, you have to apply online, you have to have the digital resume, then you say "Can you send me the digital resume?" They look at you like, "What is this?"

Program Administrator C stated that their curriculum offers,

[The] basics of computer and Internet use, all the way through advanced job search, and we're always modifying this for people, as technology and pattern-hiring and training patterns change, so, for example, we've revamped our curriculum over the last 6 months to not just teach Microsoft Office Suite, but make sure that we're teaching everyone [with] Google.

Program Administrator D stated "we have digital literacy embedded in our curriculum. Knowing we're in a completely digitized era."

The program administrators recognized that prior to the digital age, employment applications were in paper format or people just walked into a job, handed out a resume, and secured employment. Even with interviewing, there are virtual interviews (such as Skype) that their participants are unfamiliar with and how to use the program. Program

Administrator D evaluated participants' anxieties relating to using computers because this could cause the participants to give up on job searches. Program Administrator C and Program Administrator D expressed that digital literacy is a true challenge for returning citizens, because technology, such as cell phones and iPads, are the way to communicate and conduct business. Program Administrator A identified that administrative assistant or clerical jobs are shortly being phased out because technology has it so that a job can have virtual assistants. Program Administrator A also noted that "virtual assistants rooted in artificial intelligence (like Siri or Echo) not only reduce overhead costs, but they can make travel arrangements, type letters, research topics—making the traditional clerical worker extinct." So, the days of a traditional administrative assistants or secretaries and typewriters are becoming past needs. On the contrary, Program Administrator E was promoting their administrative assistant training program because they believed there still is a need for a physical person to be the clerical support as the first point of contact at front desks or in supporting a division.

Program Administrator E acknowledged that it is best to learn computer programs to be an asset to jobs where computer skills are still needed. According to two program administrators, the job market is focusing on critical-thinking jobs or physical-demand jobs. Program Administrator A and Program Administrator E placed emphasis on these market-focused jobs, via in-house flyers, is on certified nursing assistant jobs, security guard training, customer service, and construction type jobs. All five of the program administrators agreed that in this age group, 40-65, there is a lack of skills because the participants have either worked in jobs for a long time where additional software training was not offered or part of their daily use, they had gaps in employment, they not been

exposed to computers at all, or they had been incarcerated, which all factor into a lack of digital literacy. Program Administrator D expressed to the researcher that “digital literacy skills are essential for successfully living, learning, and working in the 21st century.”

Subtheme 25: Lack of education. The responding program administrators, in general identified, lack of education as another challenge for all participants obtaining employment. All five responding program administrators agreed that having a high school diploma or general equivalency diploma (GED) is key to obtaining employment, but some of their participants did not have either. Program Administrator D said of the age group 40-65, regarding lack of education to obtain employment,

Some of the barriers that organizations or CBOs providing services to that population might have to manage. Just kind of going back to their education level. I think that’s one thing I want to underscore is you’re working with individuals who are seeking support to maybe enter or reenter the workforce.

However, there are challenges around, I guess limitations or access, to resources that they might not have had or have received consistently in their early development stages that impact and make it challenging.

Program Administrator D identified the change in the GED, now known as the High School Equivalency (HSE) exam, since 2014, as being harder to pass and as a barrier of education obtainment. Even though Program Administrator D and the other responding program administrators either had or collaborated with other organization for HSE exam preparation, not having the HSE is still a barrier and causes anxiety to the participants. Program Administrator C said that as part of their SE model, they use

education attainment as a program success measurable outcome for obtaining and sustaining employment. Program Administrator C said, “Education outcomes, informs them of how many people actually have gotten certifications, licenses, degrees with our [CBO’s] help in the community.” Two CBOs offer English as a second language (ESL) course to help eliminate language barriers. The CBOs also help participants secure internships relating to commonly recruited jobs as part of the education component in their SE model programs to help participants receive on-the-job skills.

Subtheme 26: Company culture assimilation. Each of the CBOs have job developers or job coaches that work with prospective employers to understand the needs of the organizations and the work cultures. This helps the CBO understand which work environment will be best for a participant. The program administrators all understood that their participants had not been in the workforce for some time or were incarcerated and may have a difficult time assimilating into a company’s culture. When the participants are hired, the CBOs offer follow-up to both the employer and the participant to understand how well the participants are acclimating to the employers’ cultures, protocols, policies, internal and external systems, operations, and job-specific duties. CBOs C and D, that work directly with returning citizens (formerly incarcerated) recognized that participants fear their background being released or that they will be rejected for employment is still very real to returning citizens. Program Administrator C and Program Administrator D used strategies, such as a job-readiness course that includes resume writing, job searching, interviewing skills, job coaching, and mental health case management to help increase participants’ chances of employment. The CBOs also offer post-job-attainment assistance for their participants because the CBOs recognize that

participants may have challenges on the job that they are unfamiliar with, and they may not know how to deal with those challenges.

Subtheme 27: Some participants face mental health challenges. The program administrators disclosed that they recognized that some participants have mental health issues that interfere with them attaining and sustaining employment. Those CBOs have a connection with mental health partners within their communities to address those needs. Program Administrator A said, “We even have now, [program] that helps people that maybe dealing with emotional, mental issues.” Program Administrator C stated they have links to outside resources and internal case managers but “not only those resources, but some licensed mental-health counselors are on site.”

Data Analysis: Follow-Up Interviews

The program administrators all provided in-depth feedback about the SE model program that is used in their CBO, at large, and the services delivered using the model. The feedback helped the researcher to understand more about the SE models. During each initial interview, the researcher asked about the SE model used at the corresponding CBO, and its success or limitations for participants ages 40-65 attaining and sustaining employment.

After the researcher’s initial interviews were analyzed and coded from the transcripts and recorded interviews from the five interviews, there was a discovered theme amongst the five CBOs. The discovered theme was that the SE model used at their CBOs did not capture job attainment and sustainment outcomes, education, skills competency, and/or employment challenges data by age group; specifically, for this study, the 40-65 age group. The responses from the program administrators were more

age general versus age specific about this age group of 40-65 years. For clarification purposes, the researcher requested a follow-up interview with all five program administrators to check for accuracy and meaning (also known as member checking) relating to the discovered theme (FitzPatrick, 2019). All five CBO program administrators responded to the second interview. The second interview questions asked are listed in Appendix E.

Table 4.5 offers an overview of the second theme and subthemes discovered.

Table 4.5

Second Identified Themes and the Frequency of Subthemes in Participant Interviews

Themes	Sub-Themes	% of Program administrators Who Discussed Sub-Themes
Data by Age	Outcome data for employment is not captured by age, specifically, ages 40-65	100
Mental Health	Unemployment and depression	100

Theme 1: Data by age. When the researcher specifically asked about the age group 40-65, four of the five program administrators responded that they did not use age data to record success or limitations of the SE model for job attainment and sustainment, education, skills competency, and/or employment challenges. One CBO program administrator stated that the population they served consists largely of older adults (40-65), and adults younger than 40, which captures their entire data population.

Subtheme 1: Outcome data for employment is not captured by age.

Specifically, ages 40-65. Regarding the limitations of this age group securing employment, responding Program Administrator A said, “just nothing that’s specific to

that group, other than if you're there, employers expect you to have some stable work history." Program Administrator A further said,

And people see you have jumped around a lot, that shows something about your character or about whether or not you are a good person to hire. So, yeah. So, for us, it's really critical that we give people some work experience, particularly when they're changing careers.

Program Administrator A said,

So, what they do is they break out how each part of the demographic; how many members they have and how many, the majority of the members seem to be female or the majority of the members seem to be between the ages of 18 to 25 or what have you.

Program Administrator A further explained that that the "40-65 age group in the community served are not coming to seek employment." Most people in that age group, "especially 50+ are retired and seeking help with housing, healthcare, and other entitlements." Program Administrator A reviewed some data around employment achieved by age and gender over a 3-year period (2016-2019), and stated

Around 615 people that were placed [in employment] in that 3.5-year period. By gender, 330 females and 285 males, were placed in a job. However, 71 individuals (32 males and 39 females) over age 45 were placed in jobs. The highest group placed in jobs were the 25- to 34-year-olds.

Program Administrator A continued that the SE "doesn't allow for the high level of reentry or scaling up that that particular age group needs." The program administrator recognized that, often, if a participant in that age group is not employed, they want to go

into another field, but they do not have the skills or education to sustain employment in another field. That age group in CBO A had been identified as having extensive digital literacy needs that exceeded the funded training offered at the CBO. Program Administrator A then offered referrals to other neighboring CBOs with funded digital literacy training, but they noticed that,

There are some, not all, but there's some that are not interested in taking those routes, going back to a training or going back to school or to do those things. They may be accustomed to working the type of jobs they may have been working.

Program Administrator A's best guess about funding for this age group was that the city is focused on, "at-risk youth and trying to make sure that they don't fall into the system going into jail, or a gang [and] that they have opportunities at this age, that they either work or whatever the case may be." Program Administrator B said of the 40-65 group,

We don't really break them out. As long as they kind of fit all of the eligibility and other intake requirements that we have, then they're really just part of the general population to the extent that they're considered at all differently than anyone else who might be coming in to apply.

The third responding CBO program administrator said, "Yeah, we look at it universally. We do capture age information, but we don't customize services for different age groups."

Program Administrator B said, regarding funding for employment services and skills-based training, it is mostly allocated toward the 18 to 24 or 25-year-old population.

Program Administrator B believed that the city is not invested in the 40-65 age group population for employment because they are close to retiring or already retired. Most of the city's invested funds are infused into younger individuals who are aspiring, have a bright future, or will have longer periods of employment.

Program Administrator C stated that CBO C services all ages, starting at 18 years. They seek employment opportunities in their SE model program for anyone 18 and over who is seeking employment or has a desire to return to work. Nevertheless, they do service participants in the 40-65 age group with employment and other social services needs.

Program Administrator D's CBOs services all adult groups and the "age 40-65 age group make up a large portion of their populations." Program Administrator D agreed that their SE model does work well for their population in terms of employment attainment; however, the identified employment attainment limitations for this age group (40-65) is education, skill set, work history, and incarceration history. These limitations are major reasons why the participants without an education, a skill set, and who have certain work history find it difficult to attain employment, and they have lower employment attainment outcomes. However, when the participants gain those necessary skills, education and work history (via internal internships) through the SE model program, their employment attainment rates increase. Program Administrator E understood that age is an important factor for recording outcomes but continued to say, "That's interesting, because I haven't approached it from looking at that age."

Theme 2: Mental health. While mental health was not part of this study nor were the interview questions related to mental health, the responding CBO program

administrators, in the initial interviews, addressed the need to have mental health services in conjunction with the SE model. The researcher, during the second interviews, followed up with the CBO program administrators about mental health services, and how these services connect to a community-based SE model used to assist their participants obtain and sustain employment. They collectively recognized that their participants either had mental health issues prior to entering the program, or due to individual circumstances, began to experience poor mental health.

Subtheme 1: Unemployment and depression. Program Administrator A offered a different idea about employment, because as part of their groups in the SE program, they make efforts to discuss entrepreneurship. Relying on jobs to be the only source of income does not build community; “it can create a sense of dependency on a system that was not built for African American people.” Program Administrator A said,

The aim is to start having the community build wealth, and that means that at the end of the day, they have something in the bank. They have something that’s possible for them to pass down to their children. They are able to get more assets as opposed to buying things that are liabilities [like] clothes, jewelry, and what have you, and maybe they can save enough to look into home ownership and different things of that nature.

Program Administrator A said,

Traditionally, as an ethnic group in this country, African Americans, we’ve lost the emphasis on entrepreneurship that we had before. We needed to have it before because segregation forced us to be entrepreneurs. We had to find alternative ways to work outside of working for other people.

Program Administrator A believed that attaining and sustaining employment is the goal; however, it is best to create opportunities that foster income streams outside of jobs. The program administrator also advised participants to gain additional skills to “level-up,” which can increase earning potential, transferable skills, and alleviate consistent job loss. Program Administrator A, on discussing unemployment and depression for this age group of 40-65 said,

When you’re 40, you have more years behind you than you have ahead of you, you’re in the middle. Right? But it doesn’t mean that life stops. And I think oftentimes people believe that they’re too old to pursue dreams and aspirations.

Program Administrator B said they accept that their participants have a variety of mental health needs and are ready to help participants address them. The CBO program administrator also believed that,

People have mental health needs, and that they’re going to get depressed because their life is not where they want it to be. Then poverty is just really stressful . . . because you think your life should be in a certain place, and you’re not there yet. But, for us, we generally accept the fact that you have a lot of mental health needs that we need to address when you’re in our program.

Program Administrator B, in their SE program, did not just do job training but used a collaborative, holistic approach with participants by looking at their whole life to understand what is going well, understand strengths, and identify what they need to change. While depression or poor mental health does exist with many participants, it is still a stigma in the community. Program Administrator B said, with the 40-65 age group and the Hispanic culture,

Assessing mental health services, or even admitting to yourself that this might be something that's getting in your way, is embarrassing. And especially in the Hispanic community that we serve. We see "it's not that I'm depressed." It's, "I have a stomachache" or "I've got a headache every day," and it's manifesting in these ways.

Program Administrator B believed that at ages 40-65, if a participant has not achieved employment, gotten an education, or secured housing, that draws stressors.

Program Administrator B believed that economic recessions in urban communities hurt older, uneducated, or unskilled participants because, while younger age groups in the same or similar education category (uneducated or unskilled) can face depression, those age groups have a longer time to recover in the job market. Participants in the 40-65 age group have less time to recover in the job market, which can also lead to depression.

Program Administrator C responded that CBO C had its own mental-health program that allows them to screen participants by way of an in-depth assessment for depression, substance use disorder, and anxiety. If the assessment results determine there is a need for services, the participants are able to receive those services directly from the case managers. The case managers are trained in mental health first aid and the CBO has academic social work interns on site to assist case managers. Program Administrator D, said, "Participants may be experiencing anxiety related to interviewing, or depressed because their job search has not resulted in interviews or employment attainment."

Program Administrator D also recognized that mental health barriers that participants experience may have "been preventing them from being successful on their own up until this point." In addition, those mental health barriers can hinder participants from

completing a training in the program or attain and sustain employment. This CBO program administrator, as well as other program administrators, recognized—several years ago—that mental health was an area where resources were needed to support participants. Funding became available, but that funding is in jeopardy of being reduced, or eliminated, which can hurt the program and ultimately pull resources from the participants.

Program Administrator C recognized that at ages 40-65, participants “earning capacity is so much lower when you start working or reenter the workforce at those ages.” Program Administrator C said, “even if you get yourself organized, and you’re training on a career path later in life” the time is less for retirement savings. Program Administrator D spoke of a participant who was incarcerated for over 20 years, in [gender] early 60s, seeking employment. Program Administrator D outlined multiple barriers for this participant, such as unemployment, lack of education, lack of skills, lack of digital literacy, age, and housing that spun a recipe for depression or recidivism. Program Administrator D recognized that unemployment, coupled with homelessness, absent education and skills, and an inconsistent systematic judicial system, are disastrous to their population. The CBO program administrator was sensitive to the participants who were in group settings where others are achieving employment and they are not, which opens the door to depression and isolation. This CBO program administrator was constantly seeking ways to support participants facing mental health issues. Program Administrator E offered referrals to mental health community partners for their participants due to the vulnerability of the population. Program Administrator E’s SE

model “implies that if they are in their program, that means the participant is not where they want to be in life.”

While the CBOs are not mental health agencies, they do offer resources internally to help participants with these needs. The CBO program administrators recognized that their participants were coming from various backgrounds, such as unemployment, incarceration, homelessness, employed but homeless, educated but underemployed, single families, and other oppressive backgrounds, which not only have financial implications but have an impact on the participants mental health, physical health, and well-being.

Summary of Results

The results of this study were discovered through the use of the answers to semi-structured interview questions presented to five program administrators at urban CBOs. The theoretical frameworks used to create the research questions and that guided this study were resilience theory, adult learning theory, and psychoanalytic theory of psychosocial development. Resilience theory, Ledesma (2014) suggested resilience is the “ability to bounce back from adversity, frustration, and misfortune” (p. 1). Resilience in this study refers to the ability to bounce back during adversarial times (Cicchetti & Garnezy 1993; Garnezy, 1991; Ginsburg, 2016) and refers to the participants’ will to combat unemployment. Resilience is a survival technique that transcends cultures and ethnic backgrounds during times of adversity, because humans have an innate spirit to want to have hope and optimism during stressful, adverse times (Benard, 2002). According to the program administrators in this study, the participants in the CBOs had diligently come to the program to obtain the skills they needed to attain and sustain

employment. The participants wanted to learn new skills that could enhance the probability of employment.

The researcher understood from the program administrators that the participants had a desire to work, learn, and be productive citizens in society. The participants' resilience drove them to want to take care of their families, their personal needs, their necessities, and their wants. The participants wanted to be in control of making choices and having a voice on how they bounced back from adversity. The study revealed the participants were eager to learn how to deal with stress and sought help from the CBOs' support services for help. The participants were motivated to successfully move from one area of life by putting adversity behind them. The participants came to the SE program because they needed positive connections to express their feelings of despair while working on who they wanted to become and how they wanted to make a difference in their lives and support their families (Garmezy, 1991; Ginsburg, 2016; Ginsburg & Jablow, 2005; Reivich & Shatte, 2002, 2003).

The Knowles (1989) adult learning theory explains that adults are ready to learn based on their interests or to learn a skill that will help their career or work advancement. The participants at the CBOs were intentional in their learning. The participants in this study took skills-based classes like OSHA, HVAC, or construction, for direct opportunities to gain immediate employment. According to Kearsley (2010), based on Knowles (1984a, 1984b), one of the four principles applied to adult learning exhibited in this study is that adults are most interested in learning subjects that have immediate relevance and impact to their job or personal life (Kearsley, 2010; Knowles, 1984a, 1984b). Adult learners are self-directed in the sense that they are ready to learn and are

motivated to learn with or without the help of others. From this study, it clear that the participants were motivated to learn, even with anxieties about using computers or lack of other critical skills like reading comprehension, writing, or mathematical skills.

Additionally, the study utilized Erikson's (1959, 1966) theoretical framework of psychosocial development, also known as lifespan developmental. Generativity versus stagnation focuses on middle adulthood (ages 40 to 65 years) individuals establish their careers, settle down within a relationship, begin their own families, and develop a sense of being a part of the bigger picture (Erikson, 1959, 1966).

The theoretical frameworks and research questions served as a guide for coding the initial results into seven common themes with 27 subthemes, which were collapsed from 33 original codes. The second set of coding from follow-up interviews resulted in two additional themes with two corresponding subthemes from four codes.

The findings conclude that:

1. The CBOs all had comprehensive SE models that included components that had goals, objectives, and outcomes that were measured for success. The CBOs all conducted timely program reviews that identified areas of continuous improvement, constantly ensuring that the programs implemented benefited the participants and were in line with the CBOs' missions.
2. The CBOs SE model programs delivered skills and education training programs to prepare participants for entry, or return to, sustainable employment.
3. The CBOs offered mental health services, or referrals for mental health services, for participants in need of these services.

4. The CBOs serviced all age groups, 18 years and older; genders; ethnic groups; and socioeconomic statuses, without discrimination to vulnerable populations in the community the CBOs served. However, employment data and outcomes were minimally captured for the 40-65 age group.
5. The CBOs continued to seek funding on all levels (federal, state, and city) as well as unrestricted funding for SE model programs, mental health services, other critical components of the programs, and implementing new services to aid participants in their community.

Finding 1. *The CBOs all had comprehensive SE models that included components that had goals, objectives, and outcomes that were measured for success. The CBOs all conducted timely program reviews that identified areas of continuous improvement, constantly ensuring the programs implemented benefited the participants and were in line with the CBOs' missions.* Program reviews are a valuable tool for CBOs to find opportunities to strengthen the quality of their programs and improve outcomes for the participants served. In the analysis of the data, the CBOs used program reviews to understand the programs' effectiveness and reviewed data that could be used to improve program services. Each CBO program administrator shared their program review process with the researcher. Collectively, the following are major components identified by each CBO program administrator while conducting a program review: (a) assessing whether the SE model program was implemented as planned and understanding what is working or not since implemented; (b) whether the intended target populations were reached, and then identifying any of the major challenges and successful strategies associated with model's implementation; (c) are the participants satisfied with the program; and

(d) understanding if the model aligns with their organization's mission. The CBO program administrators also reviewed outcomes to determine whether, and to what extent, the expected changes, such as job attainment and sustainment, had occurred and if these changes could be attributed to the SE program model. The CBO program administrators further recommended changes or enhancements to the employment model that complemented the model's framework. Their program review also included staffing analyses. The CBO program administrators wanted to understand if staff had the necessary skills to work effectively and efficiently with their participants, identify additional training for staff, know if staff were receiving the ongoing support from supervisors and guidance to do their jobs, analyze staffing patterns, make recommendations for additional staff where and when needed, and understand if the staff had the necessary supports, such as interns and interdepartmental supports to function effectively. The CBO program administrators were keenly aware that the data determined from the programs' outcomes could also help secure enhanced and future funding.

Finding 2. *The CBOs SE model programs delivered skills and education training programs to prepare participants for entry, or return to, sustainable employment.* The CBOs were primarily multiservice community organizations that serviced all individuals in their communities including returning citizens (formerly incarcerated) with employment needs, education, training, health care, food assistance, and other resources required for productive living. Their participants wanted to come to the program to attain jobs and receive services offered at the CBOs. The data show that the types of services and skills training offered under the SE model programs were based on the labor market

need within the city or communities. The programs provided a large scale of trainings, from job readiness and essential skills to entrepreneurial and trades training, for unemployed individuals, including returning citizens, immigrants, and veterans. Many participants had families to support and were seeking to return to the workforce not only for financial stability but also to find a sense of purpose in their lives. When the program administrators spoke about their participants, the researcher gained the sense that the participants were willing to learn, with some apprehension about embracing changes in the workforce, but nonetheless, wanted to learn. The CBOs' approach to employment attainment was a three-pronged holistic approach that included needs and skills assessments of the participants, established and maintained relationships with employers, and, finally, developed retention strategies with the participants.

The first approach was to identify the needs and assess the skills of the participants to match them with employers. In that assessment, the CBOs' designated staff personnel to understand the education background, job skills, future goals for the participant and to identify employment barriers. Also, in this prong, the staff person was there to support, encourage, and motivate the participant through identified training needs and the employment process. The focus in this first prong was to assist the participants in job or career discovery and development; job placement and retention; and, if needed, referrals to other services. The second prong was to develop and cultivate ongoing relationships with employers to understand their employment needs. This second prong was important because the CBOs' staff were able to identify meaningful job opportunities for the participants, create a pipeline of employment opportunities through partnerships with employers, develop business contacts and connections for the CBOs, and identify

job-specific employment training to help the participants to be successful at their jobs. The third prong in this employment attainment holistic approach was job retention. Retention offers elements of following up on participants to ensure they were meeting the needs of their employer, that they understood any concerns the participant or employer had, the connected participants to the educational and vocational opportunities, and provided participants with continued life skills, education, and relevant resources, as needed for them to succeed. The goal was to ensure that the participants who may have faced barriers to employment gained employment, sustained employment, and participated in additional education training that would lead to employment.

The CBO program administrators identified barriers to employment (Table 4.3) and the participants identified their barriers to employment (Table 4.4). Table 4.5 demonstrated a side-by-side comparison of Table 4.3 and Table 4.4. The two sets of identified barriers, for the most part, are in line; the similarities highlighted in yellow. In the side-by-side comparison, the study's guiding theories are attached to a specific barrier. Resilience theory is the dominating theory in the comparison because those job-loss barriers were identified by the program administrators and the participants (second-hand data) pertained to the ability to "bounce back" from adversity (Ledesma, 2014).

Erikson's theory (1959) is the second important theory in this comparison. Erikson's (1959) theory emphasizes that work or a career contributes to happiness, builds confidence, builds self-esteem, offers financial stability, and provides a platform for meaningful contribution to prior generations or to the next generation. The third is adult learning theory. As it relates to barriers of employment, education is key to the success of an individual attaining and sustaining employment. Adults learning new skills or

refreshing prior skills can increase self-esteem, self-value, confidence, and create overall positive outcomes toward employment and/or career advancement (Hansman, 2017). This comparison speaks to the overall identified barriers of participants across age groups. The identified barriers are not age-group specific.

Finding 3. *The CBOs offered mental health services, or referrals for mental health services, for participants in need of these services.* Although mental health was not a part of the researcher's study or interview questions, mental health emerged from the interviews as a needed service. Therefore, in addition to employment attainment and sustainment services, the CBO program administrators each recognized the need for mental health services as a component to the SE model program. The CBO program administrators had acknowledged their participants either have mental health issues prior to entering the program or due to individual circumstances begin to experience poor mental health due to life's circumstances.

Table 4.6

Side-by-Side Comparison of Tables 4.3 and 4.4 by Resilience, Adult Learning, or Erikson's (1959) Theories

	Program Administrators' Identified Job Loss and/or Unemployment Reasons			Participants' Identified Barriers to Employment		
	Resilience	Adult Learning	Erikson (1959)	Resilience	Adult Learning	Erikson (1959)
Applicant background (criminal) history	X			Criminal background		X
Family caretaker needs	X		X	Childcare		X
Higher paying jobs require a degree		X				
Homelessness	X			Homelessness/housing		X
Lack of conflict resolution skills	X	X				
Lack of education and skills		X		Lack of education and skills		X
Lack of finances to get to work; work is far from home	X					
Lack of social skills		X				
Loss of entitlement	X		X			
Low wages; unable to pay rent	X					
Poor mental health	X			Poor mental health		X
Poor time management		X				
Substance abuse	X			Passing drug screening		X
				Feeling down or bad because of not finding a job		X
				Long gaps in employment		X
				Using digital technology to apply for a job		X
				Work history		X

Finding 4. *The CBOs serviced all age groups, 18 years and older; genders; ethnic groups; socioeconomic statuses; without discrimination to vulnerable populations in the community the CBOs serve. However, employment data and outcomes were minimally captured for the 40-65 age group. While servicing all adult populations is beneficial to the communities at large, the researcher needed to obtain data outcome clarification for the 40-65 age group. During the initial analysis of the data, it was discovered that the CBOs did not capture employment attainment and sustainment data outcomes for the specified age group in this researcher's study, ages 40-65. During the initial interviews, the researcher wanted to know how successful the SE programs were for the 40-65 age group. The researcher also wanted to know what type of supports, services, training, and education the CBOs identified for this particular age group (40-65). The researcher was seeking to understand from the program administrators how they identified the needs and sought to meet and/or improve those needs of this age group. It was unclear to the researcher if the CBOs analyzed the data outcomes for this 40-65 age group, so the researcher contacted the CBO program administrators for follow-up interviews; all five responded to the follow-up interviews. The CBO program administrators were interested to know why the researcher adamantly focused on the 40-65 age group. The researcher informed the CBO program administrators regarding Erikson's (1959) theoretical framework articulation about the 40-65 age group, what employment means to this group, and the importance of assimilation into a work culture. Additionally, the researcher shared important findings from the literature review about the connection with unemployment and poor mental health for individuals in this age group and their vulnerability to other physical health concerns. The researcher informed*

the CBO program administrators that this study and research would contribute to the field and add to the body of research. The CBOs expressed gratitude toward the researcher for allowing their voices to be heard regarding their SE model programs and were looking forward to the finished work.

Finding 5. *The CBOs continued to seek funding on all levels (federal, state, and city) as well as unrestricted funding for SE model programs, mental health services, other critical components of the programs, and implementing new services to aid the participants in their communities.* Revealed in the data, the CBO program administrators were constantly speaking with local, state, and government officials; program investors; and they were participating in fundraising efforts because they needed continuous funding. The CBO program administrators shared findings with funders from their program reviews to demonstrate that their SE model program was a worthwhile program. The CBOs know that program funders often want a program review to be conducted when they agree to fund a program, and some funders will not fund, or consider re-funding a program or reimburse CBOs for program expenses, until a review has been conducted and outcomes have been demonstrated. The CBOs made significant outreach attempts for attracting collaborative partners (employers and community sponsors), recruiting community participants, and building trust within the communities and with participants. They have also welcomed interns as a source of support for staff and overall programs. The CBO program administrators identified that employment the programs' funding was allocated more toward the 18-25 age group and funding was lacking for mental health services, especially in the low-income, urban areas the CBOs service.

Without continuous funding, the employment programs and mental health services will face reductions in services, which could be detrimental to the communities served.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

The purpose of this case study was to elicit the perceptions of success from program administrators in an urban community-based organization regarding the effectiveness of the supported employment model used to service unemployed individuals aged 40-65 (older individuals). The program administrators in this study were the program administrators who had insight from their staff such as employment specialists, job developers, case managers, and other program support staff.

The selected age group in this study of 40-65 years is important because the study utilized the theoretical frameworks of Erikson's 1959 and 1966 psychosocial development, also known as the eight stages of lifespan developmental theory. The stage associated with the study's age group of 40-65 years is generativity versus stagnation. In this age-group stage, individuals establish their careers, settle down within a relationship, begin their own families, and develop a sense of being a part of a bigger picture. They give back to society through raising children, being productive at work, and participating in community activities and organizations. By failing to achieve these objectives, individuals can become stagnant and feel unproductive. Erikson and Erikson (1982) stressed work (employment) has long been regarded as an important facet to positive mental health and identity development. Furthermore, this study utilized resilience theory and adult learning theory. Resilience theory, according to Ledesma (2014), suggests resilience is the "ability to bounce back from adversity, frustration, and

misfortune” (p. 1). Knowles’s (1989) adult learning theory explains that adults are ready to learn based on their interests or to learn a skill that will help in career or work advancement.

The lessons learned from this study were the supported employment model program used in the CBOs, respectively, is there to assist all residents in the communities served. The program model used in the CBOs took on a holistic approach to assisting the participants with job attainment and learning new skills. The CBOs’ approach was to understand the whole participant regarding job or career interests, former and current job experiences, and rebuilding dormant skills while providing mechanisms for the participants to gain new employability skills. Through the holistic approach, the program administrators were able to identify the need for mental health services for the participants. Mental health inquiries were not part of the research questions or the interview questions, but the discussion of mental health services organically emerged when the researcher inquired about program improvements and enhancements. To learn that the mental health of the participants during unemployment and employment was important enough for the program administrators to seek funding for these services informed the researcher that mental health is a recognized societal problem and mental health services must be incorporated in all employment-based programs.

Gaining an understanding from the CBOs that mental health is important during employment and unemployment, this study sought to help job developers, prospective employers, social workers, and mental health practitioners can gain a better understanding of the issue. This study was intended to add to the body of literature in the key areas of (a) unemployment and its connection to poor mental health,

(b) understanding how poor mental health is a health epidemic in American society and understanding the associated health care costs, (c) providing insight to prospective employers on how to support individuals who may be experiencing mental health crisis during employment, (d) promoting awareness of the effect of voluntary or involuntary job loss on an individual's mental health, and (e) and how employers can begin to include diversity initiatives and strategies for a diverse work environment for individuals who have been unemployed and are reentering the workplace.

Implications of Findings

The findings in this study provide implications in six areas: public policy, practice, funding, training, collaborative voice and process, and visionary leadership.

Implication 1: Public policy. As discussed with the CBOs, earning a satisfactory, livable wage means being able afford adequate food, shelter, healthcare, clothing, and the other necessities without falling into poverty. Living in poverty has an association with depression (Kowitt et al., 2020). With the average rental costs rising in the low-income urban areas in which these CBOs service participants, earning minimum wage or just above minimum wage lends to an individual being part of the working homeless or the working poor living in poverty conditions. An individual earning minimum wage does not provide an economically sufficient salary to live in large cities. Earning minimum wage in large cities creates a disadvantage to many individuals because they become ineligible for health insurance such as that gained through Medicaid. The individual poverty line to receive Medicaid is \$10,308 in salary per year (\$859 per month). This can be problematic for individuals seeking physical and mental health care. The researcher is urging policy makers to increase minimum poverty line to

receive Medicaid services, and to annually index the salaries to inflation for livable wages so individuals can seamlessly pay their rent and afford health care.

All five responding CBOs service citizens to return to the community. Drawing from the literature review, states and cities have correctional laws that prohibit discriminatory hiring practices and sets forth a background review process detailing subsequent interactions with applicants about criminal history after a job has been offered. Although there are several identified background-friendly employers in the market, opening the pool of employers would create greater chances of these participants being hired. However, there are various jobs where criminal history may not be overlooked and therefore, could create hiring anxiety for participants. Table 5.1 displays a list of local jobs. These are jobs commonly advertised on social media platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram, for all to view and/or pass on to others. Some participants or returning citizens in low-income urban areas can still be found as ineligible for hiring. The typical starting pay for the jobs in Table 5.1 is more than minimum wage (depending on the employer), there are opportunities for career advancement, and education requirements for some jobs are listed as a high school diploma or the equivalent. Many of the listed job titles are commonly known in low-income, urban communities and to returning citizens. The emotional disappointment and devastation that comes with applying for a job, knowing one's criminal history may be a disqualifier for employment is a recipe for depression. The researcher is urging lawmakers to sincerely observe and embrace second chances by increasing hiring opportunities for individuals who have a criminal history. Included in this request is to allow employers' human resources

departments to manage potential employee relations, job performance, and other misconduct-related issues.

Table 5.1

Local Jobs

Jobs	Education Required or Preferred	Hiring Eligibility
Certified Nursing Assistant	High School Diploma or Equivalent	Review of criminal history
Child Welfare Specialist	Bachelor’s Degree	Review of criminal history
Corrections Officer	High School Diploma or Equivalent and 60 College Credits	Review of criminal history
Court Officer	High School Diploma or Equivalent	Review of criminal history
Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor	High School Diploma or Equivalent	Review of criminal history
Emergency Medical Specialist	High School Diploma or Equivalent	Review of criminal history
In-Home Sales	High School Diploma or Equivalent	Review of criminal history
Licensed Social Worker	Master’s Degree	Review of criminal history Good moral character
Security Guard	High School Diploma or Equivalent	Review of criminal history
State Trooper	High School Diploma or Equivalent and 60 College Credits	Review of criminal history
Traffic Enforcement Agent	High School Diploma or Equivalent	Review of criminal history
Truck Driver	High School Diploma or Equivalent	Review of criminal history. Depends on hiring company.
Uber Driver or Licensed Driver	High School Diploma or Equivalent	Review of criminal history

Implication 2: Practice. As a matter of practice, all five CBOs conducted program reviews from a universal perspective of the SE program. A program review is a comprehensive review of how to improve the quality of services offered in a program, of gathering important data to make changes, identifying barriers for the program and its’

participants, and examining the effectiveness and efficiencies of the goals and objectives of the program (Mertens & Wilson, 2018). This study focuses on SE program participants from low-income, urban areas in a specific age group of 40-65 years. When asked about the perceptions of success of the SE program model for this age group, the program administrators provided a general overview of their success, but they were unable to provide comprehensive data that would help the researcher understand what works well and what does not work well for this population. In addition, the program administrators were unable to provide information that they gathered from this population (40-65) based on the program participants' experiences and perceptions with the SE model. The participants in low-income, urban areas, ages 40-65, have a unique variety of needs that can be specific to this age group such as ways of learning and employment needs. Adults have different learning styles, which can either improve or prevent their learning (Lee et al., 2019). Different learning styles relate to how individuals vary regarding what method of training or study is most effective for them (Lee et al., 2019). Moreover, attaining and sustaining employment can become challenging for this population because of lack of skills, lack of interviewing skills, or lack of knowing how to complete an online job application (Lassus et al., 2015). In the SE programs, the researcher acknowledges it is imperative to capture demographic data, such as age group, to identify the training and employment attainment and sustainment needs of this population. Additionally, by capturing age group data, program administrators will have access to data that can improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the SE program, which can significantly affect current and future success of the program. Capturing age data

will support CBOs in understanding and identifying specific needs of this age group (40-65 years) and advocate for additional resources to be allocated for services.

Implication 3: Funding. Identified in this study, funding for the SE programs has been identified as a barrier or major concern for the program administrators. Given that the CBOs heavily rely on government funding for the SE programs, with the risk of funding being curtailed or eliminated, the programs may suffer. The program administrators recognize the interference of government funding can cause a loss for the participants. The participants are the beneficiaries of the SE programs, and with the lack of funds to continue the SE programs, this further creates a sense of anxiety for the program administrators. With the economic deficits in today's society, funding for employment and training services could be on the rise for elimination (Tsui, 2010). The researcher is suggesting it is important that the program administrators use program reviews to show the effectiveness of the employment and training programs.

The Kellogg logic model is a tool that can be used when evaluating program effectiveness and identifying ways to improve program models (Granger & Maynard, 2015). The Kellogg logic model offers a rigorous, detailed assessment of how well agency resources, such as staff, funding, and program marketing, are used to capture participants' interests in being part of a program (Epstein & Klerman, 2012). The Kellogg logic model also can examine a program's effectiveness strategies that help participants with job attainment and sustainment and that can contribute to the success of the SE program. Funding or continuous funding is allocated to programs that have well-implemented strategies for continuous improvement and that are meeting their goals (Tsui, 2010).

Implication 4: Education and training. The CBOs have built partnerships with employers to meet the employers' workforce needs and to identify training needs. The CBOs have designed the types of training that will meet the needs of those employers. For the age group of 40-65, they are adult learners, and they need to be engaged in the learning process (Knowles, 1989). Knowles (1989) suggested that adult learners are results oriented. Adult learners need to know that what is being learned is relevant or will be relevant to their career goals and employment attainment (Knowles, 1989). Knowles (1989) suggested adult learners prefer hands-on learning, and adult learners want to apply what is being learned immediately. Additionally, Knowles (1989) recognized adult learners are self-directed and want to be responsible for their educational path. The researcher is suggesting a collaborative approach to adult learning, which helps in building individual resilience and self-sufficiency, while respecting the needs of adult learners in the learning process (Knowles, 1989; Ledesma, 2014). Using a collaborative approach creates an opportunity for them participants to give feedback on the learning, and the educators can create useful and relevant learning experiences based on the age group and interests of the adult learners (Knowles, 1989).

Implication 5: Collaborative voice and process. From this study, the program administrators used feedback from the participants to help enhance the programs and understand the participants' needs. The researcher is suggesting taking the participant feedback should further be used as a collaborative voice and in the process. Using a collaborative voice indicates two or more ideas and thoughts are delivered in one voice (Snavey & Tracy, 2002). Collaborative efforts between the participants, the program administrators, and other CBO leaders fosters a multipronged approach to achieving the

goals of growing the programs; thus, there is a potential of improved participant outcomes for attaining and sustaining employment (Chen & Graddy, 2010; Snavelly & Tracy, 2002). This collaborative process can stage opportunities for participants to have an influence in designing and enhancing the programs. Together, this collaboration process can help the participants who are the beneficiaries of these services, and their voices will be heard based on their identified needs. To do this successfully, the program administrators should serve as leaders by establishing trust with the participants, and they should be able to share the vision(s) of the programs (Snavelly & Tracy, 2002). Without trust and vision sharing, this collaborative dynamic is at risk of failing (Snavelly & Tracy, 2002). Using a collaborative voice and a shared vision, program administrators and other CBO leaders can effectively express the needs and concerns of the participants to help advocate for additional resources and services (Snavelly & Tracy, 2002).

Implication 6: Visionary leadership. As leaders in the CBOs, program administrators should seek to adopt a visionary leadership style that includes being change agents and seeing the larger picture while thinking strategically (Ani Marlia, Fahmy, Lukito, Prima, & Rahim, 2020; Berson, Shamir, Avolio, & Popper, 2001). Using a visionary style, the researcher is suggesting that program administrators should use program reviews and participant demographic data, such as age, to understand how to further carve-out data to support their needs for additional funding. The current SE program is not specifically addressing the needs of adult participants ages 40-65. As described in the study's theoretical frameworks and drawing from the literature review, participants ages 40-65 unemployment is not just about income loss, it is also about loss of personal identity, loss of self-esteem, loss of work relationships, routine interruption,

loss of meaningful activity, and loss of skills (Waters & Moore, 2002). For unemployed individuals living in low-income urban communities ages 40-65, (resilience) bouncing back is key to success in attaining and sustaining employment (Broman, Hamilton, & Hoffman, 2012). The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics concluded that unemployment and rescissions effect older adults ages 40-65 in low-income urban areas significantly. Additionally, the importance of employment to individuals ages 40-65, according to Erikson (1959), is because work or a career contributes to happiness, builds confidence, self-esteem, offers financial stability, and provides a platform for meaningful contribution to prior generations or to the next generation. When managing an employment program, it is important to understand the dynamics of how unemployment affects all age groups and seek ways address the specific needs of each age group. Knowing the importance of employment for this age group (40-65), and specifically for low-income urban participants in this age group, leaders with a visionary leadership style are transformative and require innovative process to bring forth vision of change (Ani Marlia et al., 2020; Berson et al., 2001). To change, there has to be a multipronged approach in how data are reviewed and reported, there has to be a change in the education and training delivery, there has to be a change in how to lobby for additional funding, and there has to be a change in how to enhance the program services. Participants, ages 40-65, need something more than a cookie-cutter approach to finding employment; they need a dedicated employment and training program that addresses their needs.

Limitations

The data received were comprehensive and related to the study topic; however, there were several limitations to the study.

1. This study included all genders. The study was not carved out by male or female gender
2. This study was only performed in one small location in the United States.
3. This study did not include the entire Northeast region of the United States.
4. This study did not include suburban and rural areas.
5. This study's invited participants were limited to a small group that the researcher became aware of via a government grant website that had supported employment models and included mental health services.
6. This study did not specifically study the 40+ participant community as originally built.
7. This study received a lower response rate than anticipated.
8. This study relied solely on the program administrators' interpretations of their success.

Recommendations

For CBO leaders and other urban community employment programs, create a new holistic employment-readiness model for adults ages 40-65 that considers age-specific needs and services in attaining and sustaining employment. Specifically for this age group, the importance of employment to individuals ages 40-65, according to Erikson (1959), is because work or a career contributes to happiness, builds confidence, builds self-esteem, offers financial stability, and provides a platform for meaningful contribution to prior generations or to the next generation. Employment is important to those under age 40 as well; however, when the 40-65 age group is unemployed, research has shown individuals over age 40 potentially facing adversities such as age discrimination, social

barriers, and class stigma (low-income/urban), they receive fewer call backs for jobs, resulting in longer unemployment and lack of up-to-date work skills (Dougherty, Rick, & Moore, 2017). Supporting research suggests that Americans over age 55 have a harder time finding employment (Farber, 2017) due to stereotypes such as ageism, lack of skills, and adaptability in the workplace (Ng & Law, 2014). Uniting both program administrators' and participants' feedback regarding a successfully supported employment model relating to employment and training interests, services, and support needs, for individuals in a low-income, urban community, provides the opportunity for collective input rather than presumed knowledge and anecdotal data. This model is an innovative social justice action for unemployed adults ages 40-65 in low-income, urban communities in the advocacy for services, funding, supports, and resources.

A collective input model should be guided by resilience theory, adult learning theory, and Erikson's (1959, 1966) theory. Resilience theory, Ledesma (2014) suggested, is the "ability to bounce back from adversity, frustration, and misfortune" (p. 1). Knowles's (1989) adult learning theory explains that adults are ready to learn based on their interests or to learn a skill that will help toward a career or for work advancement. Additionally, the study utilized Erikson's (1959, 1966) theoretical frameworks of psychosocial development, also known as lifespan developmental stage generativity versus stagnation focuses on middle adulthood (ages 40 to 65 years). During the generativity versus stagnation stage, individuals establish their careers, settle down within a relationship, begin their own families, and develop a sense of being a part of the bigger picture (Erikson, 1959, 1966).

The researcher created a new holistic employment readiness model see Figure 5.1 called a collective input supported employment model (CISE) model. This provides a demonstration of overlapping ideas with the intention to integrate the program administrators and participants identified areas of barriers to employment. The overlapping of barriers to employment in the CISE model suggests, from this study that the:

1. concerns shared by the interviewed program administrators were also concerns shared by the participants, and they were mutually agreed-upon concerns and hurdles;
2. overlap may suggest the ideal for programming suggestions for existing programs and newly created programs;
3. overlap suggests identified hurdles that can be addressed with potential employers in the hiring process; and
4. overlap suggests an indication for further research, especially as it relates to participants' perspectives.

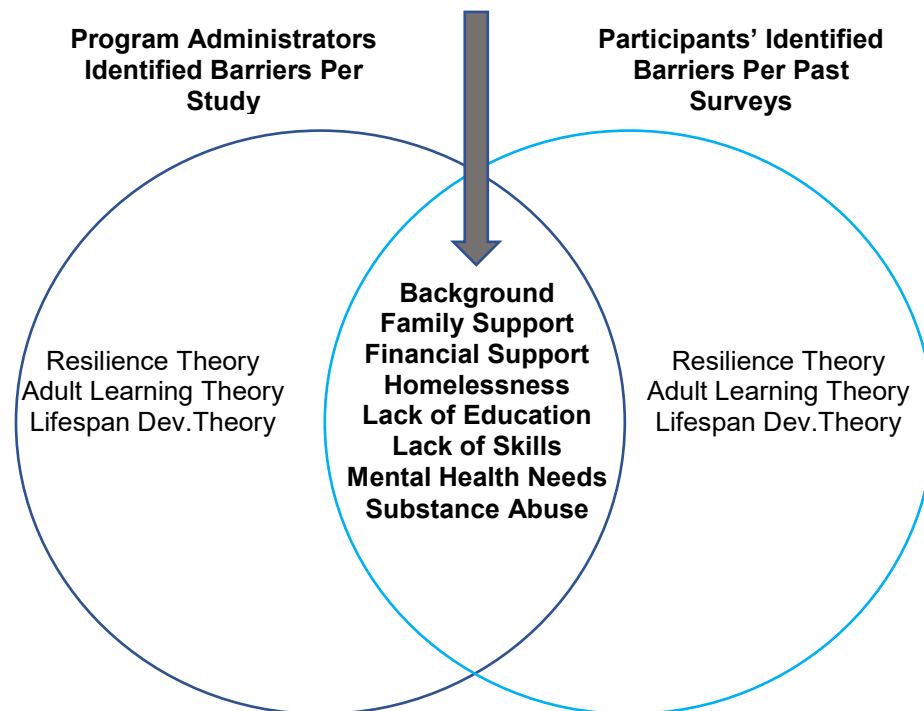
The goal of the CISE model is to deliver a transformational experience that empowers CBOs to use data to support skills-training programs, funding advocacy, identifying participants' social needs, and program improvements.

The model should be subject to program evaluations, using supporting qualitative and quantitative data from the age group of 40-65 years to understand how well the CISE model is working and to identify what is not working. The proposed evaluation tool to use is the Kellogg's logic model to evaluate program effectiveness and identify ways to improve program models (Granger & Maynard, 2015). The Kellogg logic model offers a

rigorous, detailed assessment of how well agency resources, such as staff, funding, and program marketing, are used to capture participants' interests in being part of the program (Epstein & Klerman, 2012).

It is recommended that this collaborative model be used to solicit valuable input from graduates of the CBO programs to create new programs built upon this model. The value of a graduate-managed SE program at the CBOs, collectively with program administrators, potentially offers insight on the abilities, strengths, skills improvements, and developmental needs of the existing participants.

Figure 5.1. Collective Input Supported Employment Model (CISE)



There are additional recommendations for further researcher to consider. Considering these recommendations builds upon the current study findings. Additionally, these study recommendations have the potential to develop and improve employment services,

processes and procedures by gaining different perspectives from those who participate in the study.

- A second recommendation is to perform this study, but have it divided between males and females. Focusing on males and females offers insight into how each gender views the importance of employment, learning, and understanding their purpose in a life cycle (Forret, Sullivan, & Mainiero, 2010).
- A third recommendation is to perform the study by speaking with the chief operating officers (CEOs) of the CBOs. The CEOs are the major decision makers who are related to new programs and services as they relate to the CBOs' missions and strategic plans, and the CEOs serve as the main point of communication between the board of directors and the community partners (Chait, Ryan, & Taylor, 2011). By speaking to the CEOs of the CBOs, the researcher would understand their perceptions of a successfully supported employment program, how their perceptions contribute to the success of the programs, and how the CBOs' organizational cultures contribute to the success of the programs (Chait et al., 2011).
- A fourth recommendation is to perform the study by speaking directly with the participants of the program. This would provide the researcher with direct feedback from the beneficiaries of the supported employment program on employment attainment, sustainment, learning, and participation in the programs (Torres & Preskill, 2001).

- A fifth recommendation is to perform a program review. A program review would measure program effectiveness and continuous improvement by examining the progress toward the desired goals and objectives (Mertens & Wilson, 2018). A program review could also assess the effectiveness by subgroups, such as age, which could provide feedback on different participants needs based on age (Mertens & Wilson, 2018).
- A sixth recommendation is to expand the study to other urban cities, suburban cities and rural areas. This expansion would offer insight to participants' in locations that view employment, resilience, learning and understanding their purpose in their life cycle differently than those in urban low-income areas.
- A seventh recommendation is to perform the study on a national and international level. This expansion would offer insight to a cross-cultural view of employment, resilience, learning, and understanding the CBOs' purpose in participants' life cycle.

Conclusion

The purpose of this case study was to elicit the perceptions of success from program administrators in an urban, community-based organization regarding the effectiveness of the SE model used to service unemployed individuals aged 40-65 (older individuals). The findings in the study included (a) the CBOs all had comprehensive, supported employment models that included components that had goals, objectives, and outcomes that were measured for success; (b) the CBO SE model programs delivered skills and education training programs to prepare participants for entry, or return to, sustainable employment; (c) the CBO programs also offer mental health services for

participants in need of those services; (d) the CBOs serviced all age groups, 18 years and older, all genders, all ethnic groups, socioeconomic statuses without discrimination to vulnerable populations in the community the CBOs serve. However, education or skill-set needs and job attainment outcomes were minimally captured for the 40-65 age group; and (e) the CBOs continue to seek funding on all levels (federal, state, and city) as well as seeking unrestricted funding for the SE model programs, mental health services, other critical components of the programs, and for implementing new services to aid the participants in their communities. There were six identified implications of this study that included public policy, practice, funding, training, collaborative voice, and process and visionary leadership.

As a recommendation, the researcher created a new holistic employment readiness model called the collective input supported employment model (CISE) for adults, aged 40-65, that considers the age-specific needs and services in attaining and sustaining employment. Continuous research is needed to improve SE models, on a whole, and for age-specific models that address the needs of each age group. Additional recommendations are reconstructing the study by (a) gender; (b) including CEOs' feedback with the CBOs; (c) including the participants of the programs' opinions; (d) performing program reviews; (e) expanding the study to other urban cities, suburban cities, and rural areas; and (f) performing the study on a national and international level.

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Appendix A

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1. How did you arrive at utilizing the supported employment model at this CBO? Please explain.
2. Have you ever used a prior employment type model, and if so, how does this current supported employment model compare?
3. As it relates to the supported employment model, and based on your industry experience, what is your perception of what makes this model successful?
4. Using the supported employment model at this CBO, what are some of the strategies used to help people ages 40-65 attain and sustain employment?
5. What, if any, tools do you use to measure the success of the model? Please provide me an overview of those tools and how that process works.
6. From your experience, what are some of the limitations of this model for the 40-65 age group?
7. Has your organization created a process improvement plan and procedures? If yes, please elaborate. If no, please elaborate.
8. What feedback, if any, have you received from the program staff, such as case managers or employment specialists, relating to the model that has been successful for the individuals aged 40-65? Can you elaborate?
9. Is there anything I did not ask you that you believe would be important or relevant additions to our conversation?

Appendix B

Letter of Introduction

Monday day, year

Name of Program Director
Title
Organization Name
Address
City, State Zip

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name,

I am a doctoral candidate at St. John Fisher College Rochester, NY from the New Rochelle, NY campus. In partial fulfillment of my dissertation, I am currently undertaking research on “The Supported Employment Model: A Case Study about Perceptions of Success from the Program Administrators that Use the Model with Unemployed Older Adults ages 40-65.”

My research methodology is a qualitative case study approach using semi-structured questions to gain an in-depth understanding of the program administrators’ perception of success. As I understand it, <Agency Name> has the supported employment model as part of your suite of services. In this regard, I would like to request for an interview with you or the duly authorized representative of <Agency Name> at your most convenient day and time. The interview should take no more than 1-hour. The interview may be conducted in person or by telephone.

Rest assured that information shared would be used solely for academic research purposes. It is my goal to develop a comprehensive study that would be of much use to your program in their quest to better serve the community.

A de-identified summary report of the findings from my study will be provided to you. The expectation(s) of the findings from my study may possibly support enhancements to the program model, identify ways to reinforce goals and objectives of the program model or provide improved services to the community your agency serves. I believe that you

will find this information useful as you continue to illustrate the relevance of the supported employment model in the <**Name of Community**>.

I am eager to obtain your professional input on the Supported Employment Model. Your contribution is invaluable to the study. Should you need further clarification, please feel free to contact me. I will be reaching out to you within the next three to five business days to set-up a date and time for the interview.

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at St. John Fisher College has reviewed this project. For any concerns regarding this study/or if you feel that your rights as a participant (or the rights of another participant) have been violated or caused you undue distress (physical or emotional), please contact Jill Rathbun by phone during normal business hours at xxx-xxx-xxxx or via email at irb@sjfc.edu. Ms. Rathbun will contact a supervisory IRB official to assist you.

If you have any questions about this study, please do not hesitate to call or email:

Dottie Ann Stevenson
Doctoral Candidate
xxx-xxx-xxxx (mobile number)
Email at _____@sjfc.edu

OR

Dr. Bil Leipold
Dissertation Chair
xxx-xxx-xxxx (mobile number)
Email at _____@sjfc.edu

Thank you for your time, and I hope that you will decide to be a part of this study.

Respectfully yours,

Dottie Ann Stevenson
Doctoral Candidate
St. John Fisher College

Appendix C

Informed Consent Form

St. John Fisher College INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title of study: The Supported Employment Model: A Case Study about Perceptions of Success from the Program Administrators that Use the Model with Unemployed Older Adults ages 40-65.

Name(s) of researcher(s): Dottie Ann Stevenson

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Bil Leipold

Phone for further information: xxx-xxx-xxxx

Purpose of study: The purpose of this qualitative case study is to inquire about the perceived success of a supported employment (SE) type model that assists individuals obtain and sustain competitive employment more rapidly than traditional employment models.

Place of study: _____

Length of participation: 60 minutes

Method(s) of data collection: The researcher will use a qualitative case study approach to collect data using semi-structured questions to gain an in-depth understanding of the program administrators' perception of success. The protocol will consist of semi-structured open-ended interview questions.

Risks and benefits: There are no anticipated risks associated with this study. As a participant in this study, you have a right to request a copy of the summary of findings from this study, upon completion of the researcher's dissertation. With your consent, the interview will be digitally audio recorded. The audio recordings will be transcribed by a transcription service.

Method for protecting confidentiality/privacy of subjects: In the written dissertation, a pseudonym will be used in place of your name. The agency where you are employed will

be generally described by type, size, and geographical location. Your information may be shared with appropriate governmental authorities ONLY if you or someone else is in danger, or we are required to so by law.

Method for protecting confidentiality/privacy of data collected: Voice recording data from the interviews will be transcribed using Rev Translation, Transcribing based in San Francisco, CA and Austin, TX as the transcribing service. Using Rev.com's secure encrypted password protected platform, the researcher will send the audio recordings to Rev.com for transcribing. The researcher will receive the transcribed files through the same secure platform using an encrypted password to retrieve the transcribed files. All data collected will be kept on a password-protected laptop that will be locked in a filing cabinet in the principal researcher's private home. The filing cabinet key will always be kept with the researcher. No one else will have access to the laptop or filing cabinet. All digital audio recordings and transcriptions of interviews will be maintained using a private, locked, and password-protected file and password-protected computer stored securely in the private home of the principal researcher. Electronic files will include assigned identity codes and pseudonyms; they will not include actual names or any information that could personally identify or connect participants to this study. Other materials, including notes or paper files related to data collection and analysis, will be stored securely in unmarked boxes, locked inside a cabinet in the private home of the principal researcher. Only the researcher will have access to electronic or paper records. The digitally recorded audio data will be kept by this researcher for a period of five years following publication of the dissertation. Signed informed consent documents will be kept for five years after publication. All paper records will be cross-cut shredded and professionally delivered for incineration. Electronic records will be cleared, purged, and destroyed from the hard drive and all devices such that restoring data is not possible.

Your rights: As a research participant, you have the right to:

1. Have the purpose of the study, and the expected risks and benefits fully explained to you before you choose to participate.
2. Withdraw from participation at any time without penalty.
3. Refuse to answer a particular question without penalty.
4. Be informed of the results of the study.

I have read the above, received a copy of this form, and I agree to participate in the above-named study.

Print name (Participant)

Signature

Date

Print name (Investigator)

Signature

Date

If you have any further questions regarding this study, please contact the researcher(s) listed above.

The Institutional Review Board of St. John Fisher College has reviewed this project. For any concerns regarding this study/or if you feel that your rights as a participant (or the rights of another participant) have been violated or caused you undue distress (physical or emotional distress), please contact Jill Rathbun by phone during normal business hours at (xxx-xxx-xxxx or irb@sjfc.edu). She will contact a supervisory IRB official to assist you.

Appendix D

Themes and Subthemes

Themes	Subthemes	% of Program Administrators Who Discussed Subthemes
Participant Outcomes	1. Attaining and sustaining employment	100
	2. Pre- and post-employment assistance	
	3. Lifetime help	
	4. Participants can come back to the programs for additional help and resources	
	5. Programs offer coaching, guidance, advice, and training referrals	
Outcome Indicators	6. Assessment of participant milestones in the program	100
Funding	7. Program administrators want to do more and give more	80
	8. Services will be eliminated or reduced by lack of funding	
	9. Lobbying for more funding	
Success Measurement Matrix	10. Data points on participant job attainment	100
	11. Milestones in the program	
	12. How well the program is marketed to population/ community	
	13. Surveys to participants	
Improvements/Strategies	14. Outcome evaluation is ongoing	100
	15. Funding	
	16. Use data to identify job loss and create additional prevention interventions	
	17. Work with participants through some of their identified barriers	
	18. Work directly with employers to understand their needs	
Challenges	19. Reviewing the achievability of the program and interventions goals and objectives	60
	20. Internal struggles	
	21. Lobbying for additional funding	
Anecdotal	22. Minimum wage jobs	100
	23. Unemployed participants over age 40 could be faced with discrimination and ageism	
	24. Lack of computer skills	
	25. Lack of education	
	26. Company culture assimilation	
	27. Some participants face mental health challenges	

Appendix E

Second Set of Interview Questions

As you know, my research is about unemployed individuals', ages 40-65, success with the supported employment model. During our last interview, you provided great feedback about the program at large and the services delivered using the supported employment model. It helped me as the researcher understand more about supported employment models. During the interview, I asked about the supported employment model used at your CBO and how it helps people ages 40-65 attain and sustain employment. In reviewing the transcript data from our interview, your responses were more age general versus specifically about this age group 40-65. For clarification, I need to ask you a few follow-up questions specifically about the age group 40-65.

1. Specifically, for the age group 40-65, what are some of the strategies used to help them attain and sustain employment?
2. What are some of the limitations of this model for this age group 40-65?
3. For this age group, 40-65, what feedback, if any, have you received from program staff, such as case managers or employment specialists, related to the model that have been successful for these individuals?
4. Is there anything I did not follow-up on that you believe would be important, or a relevant addition to our conversation related to this age group 40-65?