

Mike (Rhode Island)



After an extended hospitalization, Mike feared he would never be able to regain his life. While once he lived independently in the community, he now needed the supports of a residential program. He worried that no one would hire him because of his “history.” However, through participation in the discovery process, and job coaching and job retention supports, he now has a job that he loves at a restaurant.

Mike navigates numerous challenges, but he faces them head on. “One of the qualities I admire in him is his ability to be a strong advocate for himself,” said Cheryl Durand, Mike’s job coach. During the discovery process, Mike was clear about his passion for working in a kitchen, and his long-term goal of becoming a line chef.

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A job trial at Gregg’s Restaurant provided Mike with an opportunity to demonstrate his skills to a potential employer. With job coaching in place, Mike systematically began learning his tasks. However, it was his enthusiasm, commitment and dedication to his work that ultimately won over his supervisor. He was offered a customized part-time position at the end of the job trial period.

Mike loves working. He is proud of himself and the steps he has taken to change his life. With supports from his residential, employment nursing and clinical team, he has grown in confidence. “Without this opportunity to work in the community, I’m not sure where he would be emotionally,” Cheryl said. As for his employer, the kitchen manager said, “Mike is an integral part of the team. This is not a ‘play’ job. We really rely on him for his food prep duties.” That says it all right there. “Mike is not seen as a disabled guy who got a job because someone felt bad for him,” Cheryl reflected. “He is part of a team. Is there no better reason to hire?”