

Frequently Asked Questions Individual Placement and Support (IPS)

FAQs

What is IPS?

Individual Placement and Support (IPS) is a supported employment model (developed by Robert Drake and Deborah Becker from Dartmouth College) that gives people with mental illness the help needed to work successfully at competitive jobs. Competitive jobs are positions that are available to anyone which pay at least minimum wage. IPS has been extensively researched and is a federally recognized Evidence Based Practices (EBPs) for Persons with Mental Illness.

Why is IPS Needed?

Research has shown that with the right type and amount of support, people with mental illness can work successfully. However, for many, the support needed has not been available so employment rates for people with mental illness are low. Nearly 70% of people with a serious and persistent mental illness want to work. But nationally, only 10-20% of people with serious and persistent mental illness have paid, competitive jobs.

How does IPS work?

The main components of the IPS model are¹:

- Everyone is eligible.
- Focuses on individual interests and preferences.
- Job search begins right away.
- Integrated employment services and mental health treatment.
- Competitive employment is the goal (with or without supports).
- Benefits information is included.
- Continuous assessment and support is provided.

1 Bond, G.R., Drake, R.E., & Becker, D.R. (2008). An update on randomized controlled trials of evidence-based supported employment. *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal*, 31, 280-290.

Why Work?

Integrating people with mental health disabilities into the competitive workplace brings benefits both to the worker and the community.

Benefits to the community include:

- Significantly reduced costs for public support services (SSI/SSDI and Medicaid/Medicare) as workers become self-sufficient.
- Increased community revenue as individuals previously on public support begin to pay income taxes.
- Decreased stigma associated with disabilities as diversity in the workplace increases.
- Improvements in quality of life and worker satisfaction and self-esteem.

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The Paths to Employment Resource Center (PERC) is a partnership that provides training and technical assistance to promote employment and full community participation for people with disabilities through cutting edge technologies, evidence based practice, and research.

www.percthinkwork.org

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How is IPS different from other employment strategies?

The IPS approach makes getting the job the start of the process rather than the end point. Individuals receive support based on their individual job needs, abilities, and interests. Employment specialists may also provide support to employers in line with the individual's wishes.

In IPS, as soon as participants say they want to go to work, an employment service provider works with them to identify their strengths, preferences, and abilities. The important thing is the person's desire to work! No one is turned away because of past work history, illness history, substance use, symptoms, or other characteristics. Anyone with a mental illness who wants to work can use IPS. Whether the person wants part-time or full-time employment, the goal is a job that pays at least minimum wage and is competitive.

The other key ingredient to the IPS model is the integration of the employment services team with the person's mental health support team. Mental health information is part of the employment plan, and employment goals are part of the mental health treatment plans.

What types of employment supports are provided?

The employment specialist makes sure that before starting a job, a job seeker gets help from a benefits specialist to understand the financial and healthcare benefits they are currently receiving.

Other supports may include help with the interview or preparing for the interview, whether or not to disclose information about the disability, meeting with the employer, and more. Job supports are provided as long as they are needed. The supports can be provided on the job or outside of the job. The level and type of supports can change or fade away as the person's needs change.

Where can I access services?

IPS services availability continues to grow. However, a comprehensive list of providers is not available. To inquire about services in your area contact your local mental health provider. Also visit the Dartmouth website provided in References to learn more about IPS.

Resources

Dartmouth Website

<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~ips/>

PERC Related Materials

Materials related to this topic can be found on the PERC website - these materials include free trainings, resources, and the latest research.

www.percthinkwork.org

Comments? Suggestions?

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