

Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Supported Employment

Satisfying employment is a key factor in recovery for many people who live with mental illness. Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Supported Employment programs are evidence-based programs available in many communities to help people with mental illness find competitive employment that fits their preferences. Once a person has found a job, IPS programs provide ongoing workplace support.

What is IPS Supported Employment?

IPS programs help people with mental illness locate jobs that match their strengths and interests. Once an individual finds a job, IPS programs provide continuous support to overcome obstacles and succeed in the workplace. IPS teams are a partnership between employment specialists, mental health care providers and the person with mental illness. Based on the person's choice, family or friends may be included in the team. Employment specialists help individuals identify goals and, together with the team, work toward achieving them.

Principles of IPS Supported Employment¹

- **Open to all:** Anyone with a mental illness who wants to work can participate in the program.
- **Competitive employment:** The goal is a paid job at regular wages in the general workforce.
- **Integrated employment and mental health services:** Employment specialists work as part of the mental health team to help people set employment goals and achieve success as part of overall treatment objectives.
- **Individualized benefits counseling:** Trained benefits counselors help individuals understand how work affects access to insurance and government benefits.
- **Cooperation with employers:** Employment specialists work to develop ongoing relationships with employers based on individuals' work preferences.
- **Rapid job search:** Employment specialists work to help people find jobs quickly and provide the necessary support to succeed in the workplace.
- **Individualized approach:** Job searches are uniquely tailored to help people find jobs that match their strengths and interests. Individual preferences such as job location or work hours are given special consideration.
- **No time limits:** Supported employment services will be available for as long as you need them.

¹ Dartmouth IPS Supported Employment Center (n.d). *IPS Practice and Principles*. sites.dartmouth.edu/ips/about-ips/ips-practice-principles. Sept. 19, 2013

Benefits of IPS Supported Employment

- **Designed to fit individual needs:** Programs are tailored to meet the specific needs of each person.
- **Cooperation:** Employment specialists work as part of the mental health team and everyone works together to help achieve success.
- **Flexible approach:** Programs are adapted to help people overcome specific challenges. Services and support are available as long as needed.
- **Results supported by research and evidence:** Numerous studies and careful research have shown IPS programs to be effective.

Challenges associated with IPS Supported Employment

- **Adequate training:** IPS Supported Employment is most successful when supported employment specialists and mental health professionals work together as a team. This may require some training for both the employment specialist and the mental health providers.
- **Adequate funding:** IPS Supported Employment works best when there is adequate funding and support at the local and state level.
- **Coordination of benefits:** IPS Supported Employment programs are often connected to Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services and Veteran's Affairs (VA) programs. When these services are connected, more individuals have access to quality IPS Supported Employment Programs.
- **Individualized benefits counseling:** Counselors help the person work out how benefits will change by going to work, including Social Security, Medicaid, Medicare, private insurance, food stamps and housing subsidies.
- **Overcoming personal challenges:** Employment specialists are trained to assist individuals facing personal challenges while transitioning back to the workplace.

Paid employment is an important part of the recovery process for many individuals living with mental illness. IPS Supported Employment programs help people with mental illness find competitive employment and succeed in the workplace. For more information about IPS Supported Employment: <http://sites.dartmouth.edu/ips/>

Additional Resources:

U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2009). *Supported Employment, Evidence Based Practices Kit: Evaluating Your Program*. store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA08-4365/EvaluatingYourProgram-SE.pdf. (last visited September 20, 2013).

Dartmouth IPS Supported Employment Center (n.d.) *First Person Accounts*. sites.dartmouth.edu/ips/about-ips/first-person-accounts. (last visited Sept. 20, 2013).

Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Center. (n.d.) *What is IPS Supported Employment: Introductory Video*. prc.dartmouth.edu. (last visited Sept. 20, 2013).

Gary Bond. (March 15, 2011). *Written Testimony of Gary Bond, Professor of Psychiatry, Dartmouth*

Psychiatric Research Center before the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Hearing on Employment of People with Mental Disabilities. www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/meetings/3-15-11/bond.cfm. (last visited September 20, 2013).