

What is IPS?

Individual placement and support (IPS) is an employment support approach that was originally developed for people experiencing serious mental illness and has since been tested in the fields of addictions, corrections, military and some long-term physical injuries.

IPS offers intensive, individually-tailored support to help people find a job of their choosing, and ongoing support for the employer and employee to help ensure the person keeps their job.



More than 20 randomised controlled trials and 30 years of evidence have shown that IPS is more than twice as effective as other forms of employment assistance, for people with mental health conditions.

The IPS approach is based on eight practice principles

These principles are adopted by both clinical teams and employment specialists.

1. **Zero exclusion** — a person's desire to be employed is the only criterion for access to employment support. Personal experiences like work history, current mental health symptoms, addiction and convictions do not affect access, but are used to tailor the intensity of employment support.
2. **Individually tailored** — the employment support is person-centred, focusing on their skills and experience and what they would like to do.
3. **Rapid job search** — there are no lengthy preparations for looking for work. Job search starts within four weeks of being referred to an employment specialist.
4. **Focus on competitive employment** — this means jobs in the open labour market paying minimum wage or above, and not jobs reserved for people with mental health and addiction issues.
5. **Financial guidance** — people are assisted to understand the financial implications of taking up work. Employment support services have excellent working relationships with local Work and Income staff.
6. **Job development** — employment specialists are actively out and about in the local community helping to identify and create job openings and opportunities. They do not rely only on job advertisements and vacancies.
7. **Ongoing support to the employee and employer** — the person and the employer get ongoing support once employment commences, as needed.
8. **Employment and clinical support are integrated** — support is coordinated and driven by the person. Treatment plans consider employment aspirations and employment status, and health care is work-focused, supporting wellbeing.