

IPS employment support - Information sheet for clinicians

Why do we focus on employment as a health intervention?

For many people having mahi (work) is important to their hauora (health), life opportunities, and financial security. There is also strong evidence that:

- Having the right mahi can play a central role in recovery and can also support long-term wellbeing
- Diagnosis does not always predict whether someone can work - wanting to work and believing you can work are often the most important factors
- Employment can support a person's hauora and recovery, people do not have to be 100 per cent well to start their employment journey or return to work
- Employment does not necessarily lead to clinical deterioration if the person is assisted to access the right job with the right support.

How does the IPS employment support approach work?

Individual placement and support (IPS) is an evidence-based practice. Clinical trials have proven the efficacy of this approach supporting people with lived experience of mental health and addiction issues to find and sustain paid employment (which can include education opportunities). Employment consultants are integrated into clinical teams and help them to support people to access competitive employment. IPS employment support is based on eight practice principles.



See the **overview of IPS employment support** on the following pages to understand what's involved with each practice principle

What is the role of the clinical team in supporting faithfulness to IPS employment support principles?

It is important that clinical staff have employment conversations and encourage people going back to mahi. The research shows that appropriate employment reduces the likelihood of relapse.

How can clinical staff start employment conversations?

- **Raise** work issues with people early in their care and treatment pathway, and keep raising it
- **Recognise** the risk factors being out of mahi has on people and their whānau (family)
- **Respond** effectively to the person's unemployment status and work challenges that they identify
- **Refer** people, even those who have enduring mental health and addiction challenges, to the employment consultant in your team and ensure you continue to work together following an integrated approach
- **Revisit** issues around mahi to review progress and tautoko (support) each other with employment planning and follow-along supports

Overview - IPS employment support principles in practice

Use this overview to identify what you can do to support the employment consultant in your team.

Zero exclusion

People accessing clinical services decide when the right time is to start an employment journey – the only criteria is wanting to work. All people are eligible for services even if they:

- Are still experiencing symptoms of mental illness
- Have no formal qualifications
- Do not have previous work experience
- Are not sure or anxious about work, and need help and encouragement to explore their options
- Have had difficulty sustaining employment in the past
- Experience cognitive impairments
- Are still using substances
- Have a criminal record

Individually tailored

The employment consultant focuses on the employment goals of the people they serve:

- Clinicians and employment consultants use motivational approaches to help people identify their personal strengths, skills and job interests
- Clinicians and employment consultants help people to build confidence and self-belief
- The individual preference of the person guides all aspects of the employment support process

Rapid job search

As soon as people express an interest in employment, the clinical team connects them with the employment consultant:

- There is an emphasis on finding the right job match with the right employer, not just any job
- Within 30 days, the employment consultant starts helping people to explore the job market, apply for jobs and with the person's permission, approach employers to explore and negotiate job opportunities

Focus on competitive employment

- Competitive paid employment (and education, when appropriate) is the goal of employment support: i.e. ordinary jobs in the community open to anyone
- People accessing clinical services consistently give feedback that access to the right paid job supports their recovery, self-worth and extends their social networks

Benefits counselling / work incentives planning

It is important for people to know how their job (earned income) may impact on benefits. To help people make informed decisions about their financial future, the employment consultant will ensure that each person has access to benefits advice to:

- Help people understand benefits requirements (rules) and other obligations related to benefits and employment
- Support people to access calculations when planning a return to work and job start
- Support people to understand their entitlements for allowances and subsidies

Job development

The employment consultant will:

- Spend time in the local community building relationships with employers to negotiate job opportunities that meet each person's strengths, needs, abilities and preferences
- Hold face-to-face meetings with employers working together to find the right job match
- Keep in mind the job preferences of those they work with and explore a range of opportunities at each worksite
- Explore opportunities to create jobs such as 'job carving'

Follow-along support to the person and their employer

Follow-along support is offered by the employment consultant, clinicians, and others. It also includes natural supports, including whānau (family), friends, co-workers, and other peers.

Examples of follow-along supports include:

- Making decisions about sharing health conditions/personal information with employers
- Negotiating reasonable adjustments
- On-the-job coaching from an employment consultant or the employer
- Job transition support, e.g. graded return to work
- Support in managing health at work
- Managing the journey to work
- Managing the social demands of the workplace and dealing with work-related challenges

Clinical care and treatment and employment support are integrated

Employment consultants are integrated with clinical teams.

The employment consultant attends meetings and works closely with the multi-disciplinary team to find solutions to issues that impact on work and recovery such as:

- Medication side effects
- Persistent symptoms
- Cognitive challenges
- Rehabilitation needs
- Managing substance use
- Managing risk and safety issues