

## Guidelines: Integration in mental health and/or addiction teams

### Introduction

Individual Placement and Support (IPS) is the name given to the evidence-based practices which support people with lived experience of mental health and addiction issues to gain and sustain competitive employment. Over 30 years of research shows that employment is a health intervention, offering social inclusion, a sense of purpose, financial stability and health benefits.

IPS is characterised by eight practice principles, one of which is that employment support and mental health and/ or addiction treatment is integrated, whereby services are offered simultaneously.

### The role of clinicians

Clinical team members are a crucial part of an IPS employment support programme as they:

- Welcome and work alongside the employment consultant
- Discuss employment status and employment aspirations with people on their caseload early in their treatment and help clients think about the possible advantages of working
- Introduce people and make referrals to the employment consultant integrated in the team
- Share information in team meetings, such as a change in medication, a job lead, any contributions to an employment or in-work support plan, etc.
- Continue to provide clinical support throughout the person's employment journey including once the person is working.

### Treatment team meetings

To support the best outcomes for people through high levels of integration, employment consultants are part of a mental health and addiction team, connecting with practitioners as often as needed and operating as one team working together to support the person.

As per IPS employment support fidelity, employment consultants attend and actively participate in mental health or addiction treatment team meetings. Meetings are used to coordinate services and develop possible solutions to help people with their employment goals. Meetings are best structured

so that the employment consultant can ask for help when a person is having difficulty, or a clinician can discuss a potential referral in a timely manner.

## Adhering to IPS employment support fidelity

Individual Placement and Support works most effectively when it is delivered with high fidelity to the eight practice principles. Regular fidelity reviews are a critical part of assessment and quality improvement. They provide a chance to identify programme strengths and underline service development areas.

The fidelity scale is divided into three sections: staffing, organisation, and services. In total there are 25 items, each measuring on a band from 1-5 differentiating between 'Not IPS' to 'Exemplary IPS'.

Fidelity item 5 is most relevant, *Integration of rehabilitation with mental health treatment through frequent team member contact*. The components of fidelity item 5 are:

- Employment consultant attends weekly mental health treatment team meetings
- Employment consultant participates actively in treatment team meetings with shared decision-making
- Employment services documentation is integrated into client's mental health or addiction record
- Employment consultant's office is near their mental health and addiction treatment team members
- Employment consultant helps the team think about employment for people who have not yet been referred.

## Summary

Helping people with lived experience of mental health and addictions into education, suitable training or employment is an important part of recovery. Following IPS practice principles and fidelity to evidence-based practice can result in better employment outcomes.

Employment consultants being integrated into mental health and addiction services and having a working relationship with the mental health and addiction team members enhances the sustainability of your IPS programme.

## References

Becker, D., Swanson, S., Reese, S., Bond, G., & McLeman, B. (2019). Supported Employment Fidelity Review Manual – A companion guide to the evidence-based IPS Supported Employment Fidelity Scale (4<sup>th</sup> Ed.). New Hampshire: Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Center.

Swanson, S., Becker, D. (2013). IPS Supported Employment A Practical Guide. New Hampshire: Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Center.