

# SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES IN CONNECTICUT

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# WORK

- Employment Services are integral to the DMHAS' goal of offering a recovery-oriented system of care
- Employment Is Everyone's Business
- For many people, employment facilitates improvements in one's quality of life

# Commissioner's Client Employment to Recovery Policy

Employment is inextricably linked to recovery

Employment and education cannot be separated from the DMHAS treatment system in planning, systems design, funding, monitoring and staffing

DMHAS currently funds employment in 20 agencies statewide (26 teams) providing IPS services to individuals with mental health conditions, 3 agencies focusing on providing employment services to individuals with Substance Use Disorders

In addition, there are 5 agencies providing Mobile Employment Services for individuals with substance use disorders



## DMHAS Supported Employment Providers follow the Individual Placement and Support Model (IPS)

CT was one of the first states to follow the IPS model and to be an active participant in the IPS International Learning Community

- DMHAS continues to work closely with IPS Center to implement the SAMHSA-endorsed **Evidence-based Supported Employment Practice (EBP)** for persons with mental health conditions to obtain employment
- The IPS Learning Collaborative assists Employment providers to learn about best practices internationally

# IPS INTERNATIONAL LEARNING COLLABORATIVE

The community includes 26 U.S. States, the District of Columbia, Alameda County (California), Broward County (Florida), and six countries/regions outside the U.S.: Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, New Zealand, England, and Montreal, Canada



# IPS EVIDENCE-BASED SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

- ❑ The IPS model has demonstrated the most effectiveness in supporting the employment goals of adults with severe mental illness/substance use
- ❑ The IPS model provides a road map for employment providers delivering services
- ❑ Individuals using IPS have better employment outcomes



# IPS Principles

- **Zero Exclusion:** services to any person who wants to work
- Focuses on **Competitive Employment**
- **Rapid** Job Search
- **Individual preferences** guide decisions
- Targeted **Job Development**
- Individualized **long-term supports**
- Services are **Integrated** with mental health treatment teams
- **Benefits counseling** from a Certified Benefits Counselor





# IPS Fidelity Scale

How do we measure, monitoring and  
provide Continuous Improvement?

# IPS Fidelity Review

- A **fidelity scale is a tool to measure the level of implementation of the evidence-based practice.** The IPS Supported Employment Fidelity Scale defines the *critical ingredients* of IPS in order to differentiate between programs that have fully implemented the model and those that have not.
- As demonstrated **through research, high-fidelity programs are expected to have greater effectiveness than low-fidelity programs.**
- The IPS Supported Employment Fidelity Scale as a **roadmap or a compass** that can help practitioners obtain better outcomes.

# IPS Fidelity Review

- The scale is divided into three sections, including **Staffing, Organization, and Services**.
- Each item is rated on a 5-point response format, ranging from 1 = no implementation to 5 = full implementation, with intermediate numbers representing progressively greater degrees of implementation.
- Agencies that fully implement supported employment according to the scale criteria have shown to have higher competitive employment rates than those that have not.

# IPS Fidelity Review

- Fidelity Review Timelines:
  - Baseline:
    - Baseline reviews will take place approximately 6 months after implementation.
  - Bi-Annual: Follow up reviews will occur bi-annually with technical assistance provided as needed.

**Caseload size:** Employment specialists carry a caseload of 20 or fewer people on the caseload.

Employment specialists provide **only employment services.**

Employment Specialists carry out **all phases of employment services** to include: intake, engagement, assessment, job placement, job coaching, and follow-along supports.

Collaborates with BRS, AJC and other partner agencies

Specific expectations regarding: **Integration of rehabilitation with mental health treatment teams** (case managers, prescribers, community clinicians, therapists). Employment specialists are part of the clinical team.

**Employment Specialists are expected:** to have shared physical space, communicating often to the team members, share documentation, attend treatment team meetings, suggest employment for individuals who have not yet been referred, participate on the team with shared decision making.

## Collaboration with BRS

There is expected collaboration between Employment Specialists and BRS counselors that they have frequent, regular meetings to discuss shared individuals and identify potential referrals.

The DMHAS/BRS Employment Systems Manager provides training quarterly to review the standards, best practices, the difference between the services and how the two agencies work in partnership.



- **Vocational Unit:** the standard describes the employment team, what is expected of team members and how they work together.
- **Role of Employment Supervisor** – defines 5 components the Employment Supervisor must follow re: supervision, field mentoring, etc.
- **Zero exclusion criteria:** All individuals interested in work can benefit from Supported Employment. There is no such thing as “lack of job readiness” to work. All individuals have access to supported employment.







- **Agency focus on Competitive Employment**
- **Executive team support for SE**
- **Work incentives planning** is offered to anyone on benefits who is interested, by a Certified Work Incentives Counselor
- **Disclosure:** Employment specialists discuss disclosure on more than one occasion and document these efforts

- **Career profile:** Initial vocational assessment occurs over 2-3 sessions and information is documented on a vocational profile form that includes preferences, experiences, skills, current adjustment, strengths, personal contacts, etc.
- **Rapid job search for competitive job:** The program tracks employer contacts and the first face-to-face contact with an employer by the individual and/or the Employment Specialist about a competitive job is on average within 30 days (one month) from program entry.



**Individualized job search:** Employer contacts made by the Employment Specialist are based on re: job choices which reflect individual preferences, strengths, symptoms, rather than the job market. To include what each person enjoys and their personal goals) and needs (including experience, skills and abilities)



**Job development** - Frequent employer contact: Employment specialists make 6 or more face-to-face employer contacts per week that are person specific. In addition, Employment Specialists uses a tracking form that is reviewed by the SE supervisor on a weekly basis.



# Job Development - Quality of employer contact:

Employment Specialists build relationships with employers through multiple in person visits that are planned to learn the needs of the employer, convey what the SE program offers to the employer, describe the person's strengths.

This interaction between the Employment Specialist and employer is observed in the field by the by the IPS Supervisor and monitored by DMHAS review team during program review.



## **Diversity of job type**

Employment specialists assist clients obtain different types of jobs 85-100% of the time as evidenced by the data that is collected

**Diversity of employers:** Employment specialists assist individuals in obtaining jobs with different employers 85-100% of the time as evidenced by the data



**Competitive jobs:** Integrated employment that any individual may apply to. Preferred that the position is a permanent rather than temporary or time-limited status, e.g., TE (transitional and/or are not set aside)



# Individualized follow-along supports

Individuals receive different types of supports that are based on preferred job duties, job preferences, work history, needs, etc. Employment Specialists also provide employer support (e.g., educational information, job accommodations). The Employment Specialist helps people move onto more preferable jobs (career enhancement) and also helps people with school or certified training programs.





## Time-unlimited follow-along supports:

Employment specialist has face-to-face contact within 1 week before starting a job, within 3 days after starting a job, weekly for the first month, and at least monthly for a year or more, on average, after working steadily and desired by the person. Individuals are transitioned to step down job supports, from a mental health worker following steady employment



# Community-based services

Employment Specialists spend 65% of their time in the community for purposes of meeting people where they feel comfortable, job developing, etc.



## **Assertive Engagement and Outreach by Integrated Team Members and Evidence**

Termination is not based on missed appointments or fixed time limits. ii) Systematic documentation of outreach attempts. iii) Engagement and outreach attempts made by integrated team members. iv) Multiple home/community visits. v) Coordinated visits by employment specialist with integrated team member. vi) Connect with family, when applicable

# Fidelity

## IPS-25

- 25 items, 5-point scale
- 1 (lack of adherence)– 5 (close adherence)

## Total scores: 25– 125

- 115 – 125: Exemplary fidelity
- 100 – 114: Good fidelity
- 74 – 99: Fair fidelity
- $\leq 73$ : Program not implementing IPS



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