



Individual Placement & Support Best Practice Guide

Introduction

Individual placement support is an evidence based approach to supported employment for people who have severe and enduring mental health illnesses. IPS supports people in their

efforts to achieve mainstream employment in competitive jobs part time, full time or in some cases permitted working hours. This is the most well-established method of 'place then train' in mental health. IPS has been shown to be more effective the more closely it follows these eight principles;

1. Every person with a severe and enduring mental illness who wants to work is eligible for IPS Programme.
2. Employment services are integrated with mental health treatment services.
3. Competitive employment is the goal.
4. Personalised benefit counseling/signposting is provided.
5. Rapid job searching starts with the first 4 weeks of joining the Programme.
6. Employment specialists develop relationships with employers based upon client's preferences.
7. Job supports are continuous (In Work Support).
8. Client preferences are honored and encouraged.

IPS is effective at supporting people into competitive employment because although it shares a few key principles with other employability programmes it is also very different in the way it is operated and the support it provides. One of the main differences of the IPS Service is that the IPS specialist is based within a CMHT and they get referrals direct from the team. This means that it is a very exclusive service and the IPS specialist is given the opportunity to build relationships with other professionals and gain access to information from them that might not have been available through other programmes. This helps support both the IPS specialist and the client and means that if further information or support is required the IPS specialist can ask for this directly.

Some existing employability programmes have certain criteria that people have to match before they are accepted on to the Programme. With IPS the only requirement that is specified is that the person wants to gain employment and that they are referred through the CMHT. This opens up the service to people who have a vast amount of employment history or to people who have little or even none just a desire to want to work. Together with the client the IPS specialist explores job goals that the client would like to do and they have the opportunity to discuss with them which employers they would like to work for.

There are a number of IPS "like" programmes across the country. The main difference is that a true model such as the one we are delivering adheres to all 8 IPS principles. Including IPS Specialists working closely with CMHTs and being a part of the team. IPS "like" programmes do not have this unique feature although they do get referrals from CMHTs as well as other referral sources.

Studies have shown that the IPS service is successful in supporting clients with severe mental health illnesses into employment. They found that 55% of IPS clients gained employment compared to 28% supported by other employment services. The research also found that IPS clients maintained work for longer and clients who gained employment had reduced hospitalisation rates (EQOLISE Project, Centre of Mental Health).

Pre Employment Support

When a client within the CMHT expresses an interest in working their CPN, OT, Psychologist, or Psychiatrist will complete the referral form and will give it to the IPS Specialist based in their team. An initial meeting is arranged with the IPS Specialist and client and the suitability for the service will be discussed and as long as the client expresses an interest of gaining employment they can join the IPS service. The client's mental health condition does not impact their involvement with the service. IPS specialists and health professionals will work together to ensure that the client is making progress and is following treatment plans and attending all appointments.

Appointments with IPS specialists are held in the CMHT in a privately booked room. This can be beneficial as feedback can be provided to the referrer and any concerns or issues can be raised and addressed promptly. If this is not suitable for the client's needs it can be arranged to have the appointment in SAMH head office or out at a community resource such as a library.

If upon meeting the client and they decide that they would rather look into further education, volunteering or training this is when we as IPS Specialists would speak to them about making a referral over to the Work Development Co-ordinator and signposting them to this service. The Work Development Co-ordinator can refer back to us once the person feels ready to work. There is a Work Development Co-ordinator present within each area of Glasgow and they too work closely with the CMHT's to support clients. They can also make new referrals to us and provide IPS Specialists with knowledge about client's mental health and job preferences.

Research has shown that 70% of clients with severe and enduring mental health issues want to work. Clients wanted a sense of purpose, status, more activity, income, social connections and a chance to contribute (Drake, Bon & Becker, 2012). These are all key factors that gives the client motivation to work.

Job goal

For clients sometimes deciding on a job goal can be the most difficult decision for them. The IPS employment specialist will work with the client to help them establish at least one job goal if not more that they would like to do. The IPS specialist will then work with the client to find out more about what the job goal entails, look at role specification of different job roles, hours and shift patterns that would be expected and also identify any further training that is required. If the client is unsure what they would like to do then the IPS specialist can make suggestions and provide guidance around different job types and suitability for them however the job search is consistent with what the client wishes to do. IPS Specialists use tools such SAMH's vocational profile, my world of work and my outcomes to help establish and research various job preferences. Taking the time to get to know the client will help establish a good relationship and answer questions such as; what do they like doing? What were their positive and negative job experiences? What kind of environment do they like? What factors are important to them when deciding on a job goal/role?

It is important to identify a job goal with the client as rapid job searching begins within one month since the initial appointment. Job searching is tailored to meet the individual's needs for instance if the client is unable to use the computer then the IPS employment specialist will support them with this, filling in application forms and writing personal statements and

providing assistance to help build a CV and cover letter. To ensure that at some point in the future, clients become more independent in their job search, we help them to join one of the PC classes, mainly provided by local libraries and the RESTART project if they wish to do so.

Action Plan

IPS Specialist support clients to set goals in their Action Plan which is reviewed every four weeks and ensure that goals are SMART. This means they are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound. It looks at where the client is now, where they want to be and what steps they have to take to get there. It is important that the clients' goals are not unrealistic and unachievable and by following SMART goals it is not setting the client up to fail.

A first action plan with a client will include goals such as attend weekly appointments, job search, develop a CV and cover letter and support to complete application forms. Many clients will not have an up to date CV or many have never had a CV. It is important to address this early on and develop one with the client that is suitable for the jobs they are applying for.

The action plan lets the IPS specialist address any barriers and to discuss steps that can overcome them. For clients who are lacking in confidence or employment history it can be a good starting point to get them involved in volunteering. This allows the client to build on their confidence and to get up to date experience. While the client volunteers they will come into weekly appointments to job search and it adds more activity into their week. Disclosing mental health conditions can be a barrier but this is addressed with the employer disclosure form. IPS Specialist can discuss the advantages of disclosing and address any disadvantages they feel might occur if they disclosed their mental health condition. Once the client is informed of benefits of disclosing and are aware of reasonable adjustments employers can make they become more open to disclosing. Similarly, with criminal convictions many clients are unsure how to disclose this. IPS Specialists work with the client to develop a criminal convictions disclosure letter which provides details of what happened and the circumstances surrounding this. It is common for the conviction to have taken place at a time where the clients were unmediated or struggling with their mental health.

Benefit Support

Providing clients with benefit advice and financial assistance is an important part of the IPS programme. It is vital that IPS specialists ensure that a better off in work calculation is carried out to ensure that the client has all the relevant financial information in order to make an informed choice about employment and to also ensure that they are receiving all the benefits and finances that they are entitled to. IPS Specialists use a number of services to facilitate this such as CAB, GEMAP, money advice Scotland and we also have our own contact that comes into our head office by appointment only to provide assistance.

Interview Preparation

Alongside job searching and application support IPS Specialist prepares the client for interviews. This is done by preparing competency based interview questions and going through possible responses. All specialists use the STAR approach to ensure that the client

is answering all questions in full and giving appropriate and relevant answers. This gets the client to think about a Situation, Task, Action and Result and helps break down how to respond to the interview questions. We recommend to our client to have a “competency interview book” that contains a number of answers to basic competency interviews questions for example: Team work, Customer service, Problem solving, Conflict resolution, Task completion to a deadline etc. For clients with aspirations in different areas, there will be additional suggestions depending on the industry they are interviewed in and research will be planned and carried out with the client and IPS specialist.

Mock interviews are arranged to help the client fully prepare for what an interview will be like as for some this will be either their first ever interview or they may not have had an interview in a long period of time. If the client is comfortable and would like a mock interview with another IPS Specialist then this can be arranged. The IPS Specialist will mark and provide constructive feedback on the interview and will give helpful tips and suggestions to help improve interview skills. IPS Specialists work with the client to ensure that they are fully prepared for the interview. This is done by providing a copy of the application, researching the company, preparing questions to ask at the interview and planning the journey to the interview. It can be arranged that the IPS Specialist can support the client to the interview and during the interview.

Employer Engagement

Employer Engagement is an important part of IPS and involves the IPS Specialist building a relationship with employers with the goal of generating a job outcome. Clients indicate what their employment goals are which leads to the IPS Specialists approaching employers in various sectors from retail, hospitality, social care, administration and security.

IPS Specialists meet with six employers face to face every week. We research the employer before we go and get as much up to date information on them as possible. This can prove to be a good talking point and shows the employer your knowledge and understanding of their business. Once this has been done we approach employers by dropping in and speaking with managers. It is a good chance to tell them about the IPS Service and the clients we are working with and the skills and experience they have. From this managers will let us know if there are any vacancies and will explain the application process. If at that time there are no vacancies we are informed of any upcoming vacancies or recruitment sessions. It is beneficial revisiting the same employer every few months for an update and to establish a relationship so possible job outcomes can be generated. Face to face employer engagement helps find hidden vacancies and clients have gained employment through this.

Another method to employer engagement is phoning employers to arrange a meeting. It has been successful in the past at establishing a relationship and allows IPS Specialists to explain the service in more detail and discuss the benefits for employers. By doing this, employers become more aware of the support that is available for employing clients and the on-going support that will be provided via In Work Support. In some cases roles can be created to suit the client's needs and experience and this happens as a result of a positive relationship with employers.

On a daily basis IPS Specialists contact employers by phoning regarding vacancies or recruitment events. It is a good way of promoting the service and to highlight our client's skills and experience for the roles they have advertised.

In Work Support

Once the client has successfully gained employment they are offered In Work Support. This is a great way to support someone who has a severe and enduring mental health condition to adjust to working. The support allows clients to settle into their role and an IPS Specialist will phone a client after the first week of working and will discuss how they got on and ensure that everything went okay for the client. An appointment will be made every 2-4 weeks on a suitable day and time for the client and it is a chance to discuss any issues with work, anything they are struggling with and any support they might require. If the client has disclosed their mental health then this is an excellent opportunity to provide the company with support, have discussions about reasonable adjustments and hold regular meetings with the employer. This is a positive outcome for our clients who need further support and reassurance in the workplace. This positive relationship in the past has increased the chances of employers coming directly to us to fill a certain vacancy.

Employers

The client can consent to IPS Specialist contacting employers directly and explaining that they are supported by the IPS Specialist. This can be good to provide support to the employer and to the client. Employers become more aware of mental health issues in the work place and can provide support to help the client continue working. In this case IPS Specialists will have a joint appointment with the client and employer and it is a good opportunity to work together and provide the best support for the client. Employers can suggest any training that they think the client would benefit from and if any issues occur can talk this through with the IPS Specialist. A healthy work plan is created with the client, IPS Specialist and employer to support the client and this plan provides private and confidential information with regards to what to do if the client becomes unwell.

In Work Support has shown to be a beneficial way of supporting clients and to ensure they can maintain and sustain employment as well as managing their mental health condition. People with mental health conditions face a lot of barriers to get into employment and the support can help them reduce the barriers and to continue to work. Employment is a great way of aiding a client's recovery and can help them to get structure and routine back into their day. It also gives a client the added benefit of meeting new people, socialising and developing new skills and experiences.

Sustainability & Progression in Work

In work support is a great way of ensuring that the client is fully supported and can sustain employment for a long period of time. There is no time limit on how long the support is carried out for which puts no pressure on the client. The support provided to clients while in employment can be crucial as it supports clients to deal with any challenging situations and reduces the client's risk of leaving the work place. Phone calls and face to face appointments give the client the support they need to overcome any barriers in the work place as the IPS Specialist provides advice and guidance. There are situations where the client will phone their IPS Specialist to discuss any issues and by doing so gives the client time to think about the situation and gives them a plan on how to address it. Overall, by providing appointments and phone contact with the client it ensures that they can continue to sustain work. CMHT's favour this also as it provides the client with added security which has a positive impact on their mental health.

IPS Specialists also promotes progression in employment. Many clients will want an entry level position to start with as they have been out of work for a while due to their mental health and often have a confidence issue which can affect their job goals. An entry level job

is seen by many as achievable and matches their skill set the most. Once they have settled into the role and build on their confidence, experience and skills it is the role of the IPS Specialist to encourage the client to develop on these areas. One way of doing this is completing training in the work place and gaining certificates. In some cases SVQ's will have to be obtained and clients will work towards this. This promotes the idea of development in the work place and gives the client something to work towards. If the client is comfortable with moving forward in the work place, the IPS Specialist will work with them to move up the career ladder and move onto a position which suits their developed skills and experience.

IPS Steering Group

We now have an IPS steering group which meets regularly to discuss improvements, procedures, best practice, share good news stories, feedback and any issues or concerns. This is an added value to IPS as the group is made up of CMHT staff, SAMH managers, IPS specialists, clients and a member of the NHS executive team. This is a good opportunity for all involved to have a say on how we would like IPS to evolve in the future and make steps towards development.

Fidelity Review

The purpose of a fidelity review is to identifying the strengths of the service and to identify where the service can develop and make progress. We have to ensure that we are following the model and providing all 8 key principles. The review is carried out by an independent company who interviews members of the CMHT, IPS Specialists, clients, SAMH managers and a member of the NHS executive team. Information is collected from all participants and documentation and file audits are also carried out. Once all the information is collected this is then scored and reviewed. A report is the produced which offers feedback on key performance areas and highlights areas that are working and also areas that can be improved. There are 4 possible scores that a review can have; exemplary fidelity, good fidelity, fair fidelity and not supported employment. In order to become a center of excellence you must achieve an exemplary fidelity.

Conclusion

The IPS service has been shown to provide the best employability support to those with severe and enduring mental health issues. It supports clients to move into competitive mainstream employment and continues to provide support once employment is gained. The benefits of the service are it tailors the individuals mental health needs and takes into consideration their goals. Every Action Plan will vary depending on the clients' goals, needs and barriers. This is a key feature and shows that it is not a generic employment service. Another key benefit is that IPS Specialists are placed within the CMHT and this has been a great way of building a closer relationship with the referral source and a much more supportive environment for moving clients forward. Overall, the IPS Service has been successful at supporting clients with severe and enduring mental health issues into employment and supporting them to maintain employment. Improvements and developments have been made and the service continues to grow from strength to strength.