

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT FIDELITY REVIEW MANUAL

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SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT FIDELITY REVIEW MANUAL

**A companion guide to the evidence-based IPS
Supported Employment Fidelity Scale**

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PREFACE

The Supported Employment Fidelity Review Manual provides information about how to successfully conduct a supported employment fidelity review using the 25-item Supported Employment Fidelity Scale (2008). The 25-item scale defines the critical components of evidence-based supported employment, also known as IPS, Individual Placement and Support.

This third edition of the Evidence-Based Supported Employment Fidelity Review Manual published by Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Center provides corrections, clarifications, additional examples, new instructions for scoring some items, and a few new tools and documents for fidelity reviewers and supported employment programs. This manual was created in part as a response to supported employment fidelity reviewers sharing their questions about using the fidelity scale to score specific situations that had not been addressed in the previous manual.

Please note that the 2008 IPS Supported Employment Scale has not been changed. None of the items have been modified, nor have any of the fidelity anchors. Instead, the fidelity manual that is used as an accompanying tool has been updated to help improve organizing fidelity reviews, scoring the individual items, and preparing a fidelity report.

We appreciate all of the comments and recommendations that we have received from numerous people who have been associated with IPS supported employment over time. In particular we want to thank members of the international IPS Learning Community, including the IPS fidelity reviewers, IPS trainers, state mental health leads and state Vocational Rehabilitation leads, peers and family members who have conducted IPS fidelity reviews and made recommendations to improve the process.

We believe that the revised Supported Employment Fidelity Manual will improve the ratings and provide accurate information that will lead to program improvement. The ultimate goal is to improve the working lives of people with serious mental illness and those with other illnesses as well.

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INTRODUCTION

Thank you for using the IPS Supported Employment Fidelity Review Manual. Whether a program leader preparing for a review, a new reviewer learning about supported employment fidelity, or a seasoned veteran using this manual as a guide, the goal of this manual is to provide guidance for all stakeholder groups to understand the fidelity scale. In particular, our goal is to provide fidelity reviewers with information to score the supported employment fidelity items in a reliable and consistent way. For example, an item score of 2 for a program in Illinois should be the same score for a similar situation in an agency in Kentucky and in an agency in Oslo, Norway.

The manual provides information about the purpose of a fidelity scale, planning a fidelity review, conducting the review, scoring the 25 items, writing the fidelity report, and providing technical assistance about program improvement to agency leaders.

This manual is part of the Evidence-Based Supported Employment Fidelity Kit. The kit also includes the Supported Employment Fidelity Scale, the DVD entitled *Successful Supported Employment Fidelity Reviews*, tracking sheets to be used while viewing the DVD to collect information observed about some of the items on the scale, two sample fidelity reports, and two sample supported employment fidelity action plans. The Supported Employment Fidelity Kit is available by contacting the Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Center at www.DartmouthIPS.org. The Supported Employment Fidelity Scale, this updated manual, and other tools are also located on the website. Please note that an online fidelity template is available to develop fidelity reports.

Terminology

The evidence-based practice of IPS supported employment is sometimes referred to as “IPS” and other times referred to as “supported employment.” For the purposes of this manual, these terms are interchangeable.

We have tried to limit the number of acronyms used in the manual. Some of the acronyms used in the fidelity scale include the following:

- ACT (Assertive Community Treatment)
- CEO (Chief Executive Officer – another name for agency executive director)
- EBP (Evidence-based Practice)
- IPS (Individual Placement and Support—a specific type of supported employment that is evidence-based)
- MH (Mental Health)

- SE (Supported Employment)
- SSA (Social Security Administration – an office that administers government disability benefits)
- QA (Quality Assurance)
- VA (Veterans Administration)
- VR (state Vocational Rehabilitation)

For further descriptions, see the glossary at the end of this manual. Below are a few terms that are used frequently.

Fidelity item anchor: The description for each numerical score in fidelity items.

Fidelity item component: Some fidelity items are defined with four or five criteria. The criteria are referred to as components.

IPS: Refers to Individual Placement and Support. IPS is a specific type of supported employment that is an evidence-based practice.

IPS-25: This label is used for the IPS fidelity scale in some publications.

IPS peer specialist: Many IPS programs now include positions for people with lived experiences of mental illness. People holding these positions are often referred to as peer specialists. Their job duties vary across programs.

IPS specialist: The term used in this manual to refer to the person who helps people with education and job training, finding jobs, succeeding at work, and developing careers. Some programs use the term employment specialist, job specialist, or supported education and employment specialist (SEE).

IPS supervisor: The person who supervises the IPS team. Other terms sometimes used for this position are team leader, coordinator, and program leader.

Mental health treatment team: IPS is most commonly implemented for people who have serious mental illnesses. Mental health treatment teams vary in makeup but may include counselors, therapists, case managers or service coordinators, nurses, psychiatrists, etc. The practitioners function as a team and meet regularly to coordinate services. IPS specialists and IPS peers join these meetings. A growing trend is to offer IPS services to other client groups such as those served by housing programs or clients with other disabilities. In these cases, a housing team or a team comprised of service

coordinators for the specific disability group may, for example, take the place of the mental health treatment team.

State Vocational Rehabilitation: In the U.S. each state, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories have offices of Vocational Rehabilitation to help people with disabilities return to work. Vocational Rehabilitation counselors collaborate with IPS specialists to serve people who want to work.

Forms and fidelity tools

Two sections at the end of this manual include resources for fidelity reviewers and sample program forms. The most recent versions of these documents are available at www.DartmouthIPS.org.

Why assess fidelity?

Assessing fidelity is time-consuming and labor intensive. Even when fidelity reviewers explain that fidelity feedback is developmental and not intended to be evaluative, it is human nature for IPS team members to feel evaluated. Given these concerns, it is natural to ask, “Are fidelity reviews worthwhile? Why do we need them?”

Yes! Fidelity reviews are worthwhile because they help IPS programs improve the quality of services, which in turn improves clients’ lives. Over a dozen studies have examined the relationship between IPS fidelity and employment outcomes and have consistently found better employment overall for programs with higher IPS fidelity.

Fidelity reviews are the single best way to improve quality of services. By giving specific feedback on how to improve program fidelity, IPS staff can make changes to align with this feedback. Based on large-scale studies (including the efforts of the IPS learning community), we can confidently say that programs can achieve high fidelity if agency leaders are committed to making positive changes.

An additional reason for leaders to endorse the fidelity review process is that it is part of a broader commitment to continuous quality improvement. Leaders who use data to make decisions and who monitor program activity work toward excellence and high standards.

CHAPTER

1

Introduction to IPS Supported Employment Fidelity

Individual Placement and Support (IPS) is a specific type of employment service. Research has demonstrated that this method of supported employment is the most effective approach for helping people with serious mental illness who want to work in regular jobs. Because research has consistently shown that IPS is more effective than other types of employment programs, it is called an evidence-based practice.

A fidelity scale is a tool to measure the level of implementation of an evidence-based practice. The IPS Supported Employment Fidelity Scale defines the critical elements 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 is a guide for program leaders and practitioners to achieve better employment outcomes.

A primary use of the fidelity scale is for quality improvement. By monitoring programs over the course of development, program leaders identify areas for further development and improvement. After completing a fidelity visit, fidelity reviewers provide feedback to agency leaders and practitioners by sending a scored IPS Supported Employment Fidelity Scale and a report that includes observations, assessments, and recommendations for program improvement. From this report, agency and program leaders develop an action plan to address areas that are not fully implemented.

IPS Supported Employment Overview

IPS is a well-defined approach to help people with mental illness find and keep competitive employment. Competitive employment is defined as work in the community

that anyone can apply for, regardless of disability status. These jobs are either part-time or full-time and can include self-employment. The wage should not be less than the normal wages (minimum wage) nor level of benefits paid for the same work performed by individuals who do not have disabilities. The duration of the job depends upon the needs of the business owner and the preferences of the worker. In competitive employment settings, employees include both people with and without disabilities. Peer specialist positions are competitive because lived experience of a mental illness is a job qualification.

IPS supported employment is a successful approach that has been used in various types of organizations — community mental health centers, rehabilitation programs, supportive housing programs, in geographically different settings (urban/rural/frontier), and in different labor markets. IPS is a successful approach for people of different cultures and has been implemented in many different countries.

The IPS model is based on a team approach. IPS programs are staffed by IPS specialists, sometimes referred to as supported employment/education specialists, who meet frequently with the mental health treatment team (i.e., mental health practitioners, such as case managers, service coordinators, therapists, psychiatrists) to integrate IPS services with mental health treatment. Peer specialists are members of some IPS teams, depending upon state/country rules and resources. One important role of peer specialists is to share their own experiences to inspire others to work and build careers. In the United States, state Vocational Rehabilitation counselors also work closely with IPS specialists to ensure that people receive services that are coordinated. Similarly, other countries develop ways to coordinate IPS services across systems (e.g., social service, department of labor, department of welfare).

IPS specialists help anyone who expresses a desire to work. All people interested in working are eligible to receive IPS services regardless of job readiness factors, substance abuse, mental health symptoms, history of violent behavior, cognition impairment, treatment non-adherence, homelessness, work history, legal system involvement, and personal presentation.

Benefits counseling, also called work incentives planning, is part of the employment decision-making process. IPS specialists ensure that people are offered comprehensive and personalized benefits planning, including information about how work may affect their disability and government benefits. The purpose is to help people make informed decisions about job starts and changes. In all situations people are encouraged to consider how working and developing a career may be the quickest way to avert poverty or dependence on benefits.

IPS specialists help people look for jobs soon after entering the program instead of requiring pre-employment assessment and training or intermediate work experiences, such as prevocational work units, short-term jobs to assess skills, transitional employment, agency-run businesses or sheltered workshops.

Once people obtain employment, the IPS specialist and members of the mental health treatment team provide support as long as people want and benefit from the assistance. The goal is for each person to work as independently as possible and transition off the IPS caseload when the person is comfortable and successful in her work life. Job supports often occur outside of the workplace and include help from other practitioners, family members, peer specialists, co-workers, and supervisors.

Some people try several jobs before finding employment they like. Each job is viewed as a positive learning experience. If a job is a poor match, an IPS specialist offers to help the person find a new job based upon lessons learned. IPS supported employment follows the philosophy that all choices and decisions about work, further schooling, technical training and support are individualized based on the person's preferences, strengths, and experiences. In IPS, everyone is encouraged to carry out the job search and job performance as independently as possible, and IPS specialists offer assistance as needed to support people in advancing their working lives.

IPS specialists offer assistance with career planning. For some people, career development focuses on a future job that the person anticipates will be more rewarding and meaningful. For others, career development includes vocational training or education through credit-bearing or certified educational programs. Support for schooling and technical training is part of IPS and is of interest to young people and adults who want to advance their careers and earnings.

Overview of the IPS Supported Employment Fidelity Scale

The IPS Supported Employment Fidelity Scale is divided into three sections: Staffing, Organization, and Services. Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (no implementation) to 5 (full implementation), with intermediate numbers representing progressively greater degrees of implementation. The response alternatives are behaviorally anchored, identifying measurable elements of the practice. Programs that fully implement IPS according to the scale criteria have shown to have higher competitive employment rates than those that do not.

The fidelity items are described in more detail in Chapter 9, but below is a list of items in each section. Some items are scored based on the presence or absence of four (or five) components. The items that use the components scoring method are indicated below by the use of an asterisk (*).

STAFFING

Caseload Size

Employment Services Staff

Vocational Generalists

ORGANIZATION

Integration of Rehabilitation with Mental Health Treatment thru Team Assignment

Integration of Rehabilitation with Mental Health Treatment thru Frequent Team Member Contact*

Collaboration Between Employment Specialists and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors

Vocational Unit

Role of Employment Supervisor*

Zero Exclusion Criteria

Agency Focus on Competitive Employment*

Executive Team Support for SE*

SERVICES

Work Incentives Planning

Disclosure*

Ongoing, Work-based Vocational Assessment

Rapid Job Search for Competitive Job

Individualized Job Search

Job Development – Frequent Employer Contact

Job Development – Quality of Employer Contact

Diversity of Job Types

Diversity of Employers

Competitive Jobs

Individualized Follow-along Supports

Time-unlimited Follow-along Supports

Community-based Services

Assertive Engagement and Outreach by Integrated Treatment Team*

Throughout this manual, fidelity items can be identified within chapters by the use of bold text as seen in the list above.

Sources of Information

Fidelity reviewers rely on multiple sources of information to make valid ratings. For example, reviewers may find information about community-based services by reviewing an IPS specialist's daily calendar, asking clients where they meet with the IPS specialist, and noting service location codes on progress notes when reading client records. Sources of information include interviews with staff, clients, families, teachers, state Vocational Rehabilitation counselors, and benefits counselors; observations of mental health treatment team meetings and vocational unit meetings; observation of IPS specialists while they meet with employers to develop relationships; documentation reviews (e.g., job lists, outcome data, etc.); and client record reviews.

What is Rated?

The scale ratings are based on current activities and service organization, not planned or intended behavior. For example, in order for full credit for Organization item #4, **Vocational Unit**, it is not sufficient for agency leaders to *plan* to organize the IPS specialists into a vocational unit. Instead, the rating is based on how the IPS specialists function *at the time of* the fidelity visit. In addition to making a rating on the appropriate fidelity scale item, reviewers should comment in the report on the agency's plans to create an IPS vocational unit.

Unit of Analysis

The scale is appropriate for assessing adherence to IPS supported employment at both the agency and team level rather than at the level of a specific clinician.

Time Required to Complete the Review

The fidelity review is conducted through a visit to the agency, following a prearranged schedule. The fidelity review requires at least 1.5 days to complete. Two reviewers who work side-by-side during the review may require two days to complete the visit. Two reviewers who conduct some activities independently of each other may be able to complete all necessary activities in 1.5 days. (New reviewers should plan to shadow a more experienced reviewer for the entire visit.) The size of the agency may also affect the amount of time that it takes to complete a fidelity visit. For example, if the agency has five mental health treatment teams, reviewers are expected to observe two or three meetings during the visit, which will require more time to complete the visit than an agency that implements IPS with one mental health treatment team.

The data collection procedures include:

- Team meeting observations of both mental health treatment team(s) and the vocational unit meetings

- Group interview with executive team leaders, such as the agency’s clinical director, the executive director, the medical director, and/or the quality assurance manager
- Individual interviews with the IPS supervisor, a few mental health practitioners (e.g., service coordinators), a medication provider (e.g., psychiatrist), the IPS specialists, a peer support specialist, a benefits specialist, and a state Vocational Rehabilitation counselor liaison or the equivalent person in other countries
- Individual interviews with a few clients or a group interview with a small number of clients who have received IPS services
- Individual interview with at least one family member, but preferably interviews with several family members
- Observations of IPS specialists conducting job development (i.e., meeting with employers for community-based job searches)
- Review of agency and program data, including information about job starts in the IPS program, minutes from agency quality assurance meetings, employer contact logs, fidelity action plan or program implementation plan, data supplied from the supervisor about time from program entry to meeting with employers, etc.
- Client record reviews

When an agency has multiple IPS teams (a team is a group of IPS specialists who report to a single IPS supervisor), reviewers conduct a separate review for each team, but usually interview the agency’s executive leadership just once each year.

The fidelity visit is conducted in person in order to ensure valid ratings. Because the review process is resource intensive, some people have questioned the possibility of telephone interviews. ***We do not recommend telephone interviews to replace the in-person process.*** However, preparing for the review and collecting as much information pertinent to the scoring items in advance of the fidelity review will increase raters’ efficiency.

Who Does the Ratings?

Individuals who have experience and training in interviewing and data collection procedures (including client record reviews) should conduct IPS supported employment fidelity reviews. In addition, reviewers must understand the philosophy and critical elements of IPS supported employment. We recommend that at least two raters conduct fidelity reviews to increase reliability of the findings. All raters should have training and practice in conducting supported employment fidelity visits. Experienced reviewers are paired with those with less experience. Finally, whenever possible it is recommended that

review teams include clients trained in conducting fidelity visits and/or family members who can provide a unique perspective. We recommend a maximum of four reviewers per site, depending on the size of the program, in order to provide minimal disturbance to the daily routine of the agency.

Basic skills and experience recommended to become an IPS fidelity reviewer include the following:

- *Knowledge of IPS supported employment.* For example, at least a two-day training within the past year, experience working in an IPS program, experience as the recipient of IPS services, or experience as an IPS trainer.
- *Practice applying the fidelity scale.* Watch the DVD entitled “Successful Supported Employment Fidelity Reviews.” The individual videos from the DVD are posted on the website under Resources. The Supported Employment Fidelity Kit that can be ordered from the website includes the DVD. An IPS reviewer watches the entire DVD and uses the tracking sheets in the fidelity kit to practice collecting information and scoring items.
- *Experience observing an IPS fidelity review.* An IPS reviewer must observe at least one fidelity visit, listen to the consensus scoring discussion, and listen to the review of the report with an agency by an experienced fidelity reviewer. At this point, a person is qualified to conduct a review with another more experienced fidelity reviewer.

Although the preferred method for conducting fidelity reviews is to employ independent fidelity reviewers unaffiliated with the agency where the IPS is located, it is also possible to conduct a rigorous fidelity review with valid fidelity ratings using agency personnel as fidelity reviewers. The guiding principles are to maximize objectivity and to minimize conflict of interests. If the agency conducts an internal fidelity review, it is obviously important for the ratings to be made objectively, based on hard evidence. Circumstances will dictate decisions in this area, but we encourage agency leaders to choose a review process that fosters objectivity in ratings by identifying two staff members who are not centrally involved in providing the service, such as people in the quality assurance department or compliance department. With regard to external reviews, there is a distinct advantage in using raters who are familiar with the agency and IPS services, but at the same time are independent. The goal in this process is the selection of objective and competent raters who receive training and have experience conducting IPS supported employment fidelity reviews. IPS supervisors are sometimes trained as fidelity reviewers and are part of review teams for each other’s agencies. Other examples of fidelity reviewers are IPS trainers, state mental health staff, state Vocational Rehabilitation counselors, and full-time fidelity reviewers.

Missing Data

The scale is designed to be filled out completely. All items should be scored. It is essential that reviewers obtain the required information for every item. Reviewers make notes of responses given by the interviewees. If reviewers do not obtain necessary information at the time of the site visit, they should collect it at a later date either by telephone or through another visit. If the fidelity reviewers cannot find information to score an item, then the default value is 1. Even if an item does not appear to apply to an agency, the item is still rated. For example, if an agency does not have mental health treatment teams, the item **Integration of Rehabilitation with Mental Health Treatment thru Frequent Team Member Contact** is scored 1 or 2, depending on whether the other components of the criterion are present. If the scale anchor descriptors do not reflect what the reviewers observe, reviewers focus on the central meaning of the item (see the rationale for each item in Chapter 9). Score 5 is fully implemented. Score 4 is adequately implemented. Scores 1 through 3 reflect that the criterion is essentially not implemented at varying degrees.

Other Populations

The IPS Supported Employment Fidelity Scale has been used for people living with serious mental illness. The scale is also used for other populations of people receiving IPS services, for example, people with post-traumatic stress disorder, spinal cord injury, traumatic brain injury, autism spectrum disorder, and people receiving welfare benefits (i.e., the Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) program in the United States).

Supported Education

While assisting people to advance their careers through additional schooling and technical training has always been considered part of the IPS intervention, the service is likely underutilized and is not measured on the Supported Employment Fidelity Scale. Schooling is a normal activity for young adults, transition-age youth, and youth who are experiencing a first episode of psychosis, but many older people are also interested in advancing their employment opportunities through additional education and training. Several scales have been developed that describe supported education, though those scales have not yet been validated. A primary question that needs to be resolved through research is related to the staffing pattern; should there be a separate IPS position of supported education specialist or should the IPS specialist carryout both employment and education services?

The Fidelity Report

The fidelity report is the mechanism for explaining the scores on the fidelity scale and providing interpretation of the assessment, highlighting both strengths and weaknesses.

The report should be informative, factual, and constructive. The recipients of this report will vary according to the purposes, but typically include the key administrators involved in the fidelity visit (e.g., agency executive director, IPS supervisor).

The purpose of the report is not only to provide scores, but also to help the agency staff feel encouraged about what they are doing well and to help them improve. The report helps agency leaders and staff understand how services are congruent, or not, with the evidence-based approach. To that end, reviewers include factual information about how services are provided. For example, quotes (without names), a list of caseload sizes, information from client records such as the number of community visits found in a sample of records, etc. Reviewers compare and contrast high fidelity services to current services accordingly.

A detailed description of the report, as well as instructions on how to prepare it, can be found in Chapter 7.

CHAPTER

2

Preparing for the Fidelity Site Visit

Create a timeline for the IPS supported employment fidelity review. Fidelity reviews require careful coordination and good communication. Therefore, it is useful to list all the necessary activities leading up to, during, and following the visit. For instance, the timeline can include a due date for the IPS supervisor to submit a draft fidelity visit agenda to reviewers and a meeting date after the fidelity visit for reviewers to score the fidelity items.

When to Schedule Reviews

The baseline fidelity review refers to the first review at an agency. For IPS programs that have been newly developed, wait six to nine months after start-up (i.e., after hiring and training staff) to schedule the first review. The purpose in waiting is to allow time for providing training and making organizational changes as needed. In addition, it is best to evaluate the program when the staff has helped some people obtain jobs. Otherwise, some of the fidelity items will automatically receive low ratings.

Fidelity visits may be rescheduled when staff turnover occurs before a scheduled visit. For example, seven weeks before a scheduled fidelity visit, an IPS supervisor and one of two employment specialists left their positions. Reviewers discussed rescheduling the fidelity visit with agency leaders so that the report and recommendations would feel relevant to the new IPS team.

Agency Contact Person

Establish a contact person at the agency to arrange the visit and communicate the purpose and scope of the fidelity visit to program staff. The IPS supervisor usually carries out this role. Exercise common courtesy in scheduling well in advance, respecting the competing time demands on the IPS specialists and other practitioners, etc. Ask the IPS supervisor who should receive the fidelity report. At minimum, send the report to the person who requested the fidelity review (e.g., the executive director) and the IPS supervisor.

Sample IPS Supported Employment Fidelity Review Timeline

Oct 10	Lead reviewer: Send outline of fidelity activities to the agency contact person and request a schedule for the visit. Include a request for documentation.
Nov 5	Lead reviewer: Contact the agency lead person a second time if the schedule has not been sent. Review the schedule to ensure that all necessary activities are included. Contact the agency lead person if changes are required.
Nov 11	Lead reviewer: Call the contact person at the agency to finalize the schedule and confirm the visit.
Nov 13-14	Fidelity visit.
Nov 16	All fidelity reviewers meet (by phone, if necessary) to develop consensus for the final scores. Reviewers complete their own initial ratings prior to this meeting.
Nov 20	First draft of report (written by lead reviewer) is shared with the other fidelity reviewers for feedback and edits.
Nov 27	Final report is sent to agency staff.
Dec 10	Reviewers speak with agency staff who requested the review to summarize findings, discuss recommendations, and answer questions.

Shared Understanding with Agency Staff

The IPS fidelity review team communicates to each person interviewed or observed about the goals of the fidelity review. Reviewers should also inform program staff about who receives the report and what information is provided.

The most successful fidelity reviews are those in which the reviewers and agency staff share the goal of using the fidelity review process to determine the level of implementation of the evidence-based practice. If administrators or line staff fear that the report will include negative findings or low scores or that they will lose funding based on the report, then the accuracy of the data collected may be compromised. The best arrangement is one in which all parties are interested in as accurate and complete information as possible. One reviewer begins each interview by saying, “The purpose of this review is to help more people get jobs.”

List of Information to Request from Site

In advance of the visit, ask the IPS supervisor to prepare the following information that the reviewers will need at the beginning of the review:

- Names of IPS staff, indication if they are full-time positions, when first hired in the current role, and assigned caseloads. Also ask the supervisor to indicate where each person on the caseload receives mental health treatment (which mental health treatment team or agency).
- A list of current jobs held, including job titles, job start dates, job end dates if applicable, type of employment (i.e., competitive job, transitional employment job, sheltered job, set-aside job for people with disabilities, volunteer job) *and* names of businesses. If fewer than ten people are employed (for a team of two or more IPS specialists), ask for a list of job starts for the past six months. If fewer than five people are employed for an IPS program with just one IPS specialist, ask for a list of job starts for the past six months.
- A list of educational institutions and technical training schools IPS clients have attended in the past six months, including start/end dates of attendance, and subject area.
- The number of people who have participated in situational assessments during the past six months. (*Situational assessments* refer to short-term work assignments that occur at an agency or in the community. The purpose is to evaluate work behaviors such as attendance, ability to persist at tasks, social skills and so forth. These assessments may also evaluate the person’s ability to perform a particular type of work.) Note that situational assessments are not congruent with the IPS approach.
- The number of people who have participated in vocational evaluation during the past six months. (*Vocational evaluation* refers to a battery of tests and work samples that measure academic levels, manual dexterity, short and long-term recall, range of motion, vocational interests, ability to sort items, etc.) Note that vocational evaluation is not congruent with the IPS approach.
- IPS specialist and IPS supervisor staff vacancies for the last six months.

- Available documentation indicating location of services provided by IPS specialists, i.e., agency or community.
- Agency brochure.
- Brochures (or program descriptions) for each vocational service available to agency clients.
- Copy of the IPS fidelity action plan or program implementation plan, if available.
- Completed employer contact forms for each IPS specialist for the past two months.
- Field mentoring logs (or notes from supervisor making employer contacts with employment specialists), if available.
- Access to at least 10 client records for the documentation review: two records for unemployed people who have been closed to the IPS supported employment program in last six months because they stopped attending appointments, and at least five records for people who have started work while in the IPS program, and at least three other records for people currently in job search or going to school.

List of Activities/Interviews to Schedule for the Fidelity Review

The schedule should include the following activities:

- Meet with the IPS supervisor for a brief orientation to the agency (15 minutes).
- Observe vocational unit meeting (1 hour).
- Observe at least one mental health treatment team meeting (1 hour).

Note: If an agency has multiple mental health treatment teams, reviewers observe more than one team meeting. For example, if an agency has five mental health treatment teams, reviewers observe two or three team meetings.

- Interview members of the agency's executive leadership, including the executive director, quality assurance director, and clinical director (30 minutes).
- Interview a psychiatrist or the medical director (15 minutes).
- Interview at least three case managers/service coordinators/therapists individually (30 minutes). Avoid interviewing the same case managers/service coordinators/therapists at each fidelity visit.
- Observe at least two IPS specialists as they meet with employers to schedule appointments and learn about their businesses (one hour to 90 minutes per specialist). Avoid shadowing the same IPS specialists in subsequent fidelity visits, if possible. Request that specialists schedule at least one meeting with an employer to learn about a business during the fidelity visit. If needed, adjust the fidelity schedule for those meetings.
- Interview individual IPS specialists to collect data not observed (30 minutes).

- Interview a small group (i.e., five to seven people) who have received supported employment services (30 minutes).
- Interview a couple of family members (30 minutes each). Interview by telephone if necessary to accommodate families.
- Read a sample of at least 10 records for people who have received IPS services.
- Interview a state Vocational Rehabilitation counselor and/or Vocational Rehabilitation supervisor who work with the IPS program (30 minutes). In countries other than the U.S., consider which agencies or programs impact the working lives of people in the IPS program and interview a representative.
- Interview a work incentive counselor/benefits counselor (30 minutes).
- Interview one or two IPS peer specialists if available, who provide support services to the employment program (30 minutes each).
- Interview the IPS supervisor (30 minutes).

Many IPS teams now include peer specialist positions. Reviewers interview peers individually and ask questions about their job duties and how they relate to the IPS unit. The duties of IPS peers vary by program. See Chapter 6 for more information about fidelity and IPS peer specialists.

When an agency has more than one IPS team, separate reviews are scheduled for each team. A team consists of a group of IPS specialists who report to one supervisor. Reviewers only interview executive leaders (executive director, quality assurance director, clinical director) one time only each year and use that interview and scoring information for all of the fidelity reports at that agency.

In the Fidelity Tools section of this manual, we include a sample of the initial letter that we recommend the fidelity review team sends to the agency contact person outlining requirements for documentation and fidelity visit activities. This initial contact letter helps to set expectations and to ensure the IPS team is prepared for the visit.

To ensure objectivity, the client record review should be based on a random selection procedure. As a practical matter, the logistics of identifying the records for review should be handled by the agency coordinated by the IPS team leader or an appropriate agency manager. The files that fidelity reviewers will examine should be set aside prior to the fidelity visit. Ask to include three records of people who are scheduled to be interviewed, two records of people who are no longer receiving IPS services (which may provide information about how the team approaches assertive outreach), five records for people who have started work within the past six months (to score the item **Time-unlimited Follow-along Supports**), and three records for people in job search or in school. Ideally, the number of client records set aside for review should exceed these minimum numbers.

There may be some agenda items that cannot be scheduled. For example, if the agency does not provide team-based care, reviewers may not observe a mental health treatment team meeting to score the item **Integration of Rehabilitation with Mental Health Treatment thru Frequent Team Member Contact**. If this is the case, reviewers will select a lower score based on objective evidence about which components are met. Another example is that an IPS supervisor may not be able to locate family members who agree to be interviewed. Reviewers would follow up by asking if employment specialists routinely ask to include family members or other support people in each person's employment plan.

If possible, schedule the visit on the weekday that the mental health treatment team(s) meets because it is often difficult to reschedule that meeting. If the IPS unit meeting does not naturally occur during the scheduled visit, ask the IPS supervisor if it is possible to reschedule the meeting so that it occurs during the visit. Alternatively, if the program location is close to where the reviewers work, ask to visit a vocational unit meeting the week before or after the fidelity visit.

Request a draft fidelity schedule prior to the visit. Visits go smoothly if the schedule includes the activities listed above, the names and positions of people involved, and timeframes. If the schedule is not complete, contact the supervisor to request specific changes to the schedule. Client names should not be included in the schedule. Below is a sample schedule for a fidelity team of two experienced reviewers.

Sample Schedule of an IPS Supported Employment Fidelity Review

DAY ONE

- 8:30 IPS Supervisor and Clinical Director: Overview of the agency and IPS service
- 9:00 Mental health treatment team meeting observation
- 10:00 Interviews with three case managers/service coordinators (each reviewer independently interviews one practitioner)
- 10:30 Interview with agency executive director, quality assurance director, and clinical director (group interview)
- 11:15 Client group interview (individual interviews if requested)
- 12:15 Lunch
- 1:00 Client records review
- 2:30 Interview with a mental health treatment team supervisor
- 3:00 Interview with benefits counselor
- 3:30 Shadow IPS specialists conducting job development (reviewers observe different specialists and ask each to make more than one employer visit)

5:00 Break for the day

DAY TWO

9:00 IPS unit meeting observation

10:00 IPS supervisor interview

10:45 Medical director interview

11:00 Family interview (one reviewer)

State Vocational Rehabilitation counselor interview (one reviewer)

11:30 Interview two IPS specialists (reviewers conduct separate interviews)

11:30 Records review

1:00 Review ends

Confidentiality

Prior to the visit, ask the IPS supervisor whether the reviewers need to sign confidentiality agreements regarding client information. Remove client names from all documents that you take from the agency (e.g., the job list).

Fidelity Review Debriefing

Agency leaders may request that reviewers describe initial impressions of the program at the end of the fidelity review on the second day. We recommend that reviewers explain that it is premature to give overall impressions because the reviewers have neither discussed the information collected nor gained consensus on scores in order to develop recommendations. The reviewers explain that they will send a report within a couple of weeks and follow up with a teleconference or meeting to review the report and answer questions.

CHAPTER

3

Conducting the Fidelity Site Visit

Overview

The general strategy in conducting the fidelity visit is to obtain information from as many sources as possible. When all the data sources converge, reviewers can be more confident in the validity of the ratings. However, experience suggests that the sources sometimes disagree. If there is conflicting information, for example, if an IPS specialist indicates a higher rate of community-based services than is documented in the client records, reviewers look for another source of information to help understand the discrepancy. For example, when reviewing client records they look for service locations and they also ask clients where they meet with IPS specialists. As much as possible, ratings are based on objective information from multiple sources, e.g., client records, practitioners, administrators, clients, family members.

Unexpected changes in the schedule sometimes occur during the visit. Someone may be absent due to illness and therefore not available for an interview or a clinical emergency may prevent the psychiatrist from meeting the reviewer as scheduled. As visitors to the agency, reviewers are courteous and flexible in response to unexpected changes.

If it is impossible to complete an activity during the visit, reviewers offer to reschedule those activities the following week. For example, if a benefits counselor is unexpectedly absent during the visit, reviewers ask the IPS supervisor to help set up a phone interview with the benefits counselor the following week. When a reviewer attempts to shadow an IPS specialist conducting job development, but finds that the activity scheduled is actually an employer visit to follow up about a client who is already employed (a job support), the reviewer should ask to observe an in-person employer contact for someone who is not employed. If that activity cannot be arranged, **Job Development - Quality of Employer Contact** is scored 1 (see Page 107 for item description and scoring information).

The agency has an important role in handling unforeseen scheduling issues. For example, the IPS team leader might have contingency plans in mind in anticipation of last-minute cancellations. The reason is to maximize the IPS reviewers' use of time and their exposure to information. The more complete the information the reviewers receive, the more accurate the fidelity review will be.

The first step in the fidelity review is a meeting with the IPS supervisor and other agency leaders for an overview of the agency and program. The fidelity reviewers begin by briefly summarizing the purpose of the visit and the schedule for the day. At the beginning of each interview or observation (e.g., team meeting, shadowing an IPS specialist), they briefly describe the purpose of the fidelity visit. Reviewers explain that client names will not be included in the report and information about specific practitioners will not be recorded by name. Watch the DVD, "Successful Supported Employment Fidelity Reviews," for examples of how reviewers describe the review process to agency staff who are interviewed or observed.

Reviewers avoid statements and questions that lead staff to the desired answers rather than reflecting the actual practice at the site. For example, instead of asking, "Do you spend all of your time conducting employment services?" they say, "Tell me about the last time that you helped a client with something that wasn't related to a job or schooling." The format for interviewing is conversational rather than a structured interview. Reviewers use good interviewing skills (e.g., open-ended questions, reflective statements) that encourage the interviewee to share information. Information is not necessarily obtained in the order that the items are listed on the Supported Employment Fidelity Scale.

Sample questions for each fidelity item are included in this manual. A list of sample questions, organized by stakeholder groups, is included in the Supported Employment Fidelity Kit and in Fidelity Tools near the end of this manual. Review the list of sample questions before ending each interview to ensure that important topics were covered.

Reviewers shadow one or more IPS specialist while they are building in-person relationships with employers. Reviewers use the travel time to ask the IPS specialist questions about the program. For example, the reviewer may ask the specialist how often she attends mental health treatment team meetings.

While observing team meetings and employer meetings for job development, reviewers observe and do not participate in the meetings. They refrain from offering suggestions. Their role is to gather information about the program's current practices in order to score

the fidelity items. Technical assistance is provided *after* the fidelity report is reviewed with agency staff.

After the first day of the fidelity visit reviewers discuss what information was collected toward scoring each item. Following the fidelity scale and manual, they determine what information they still need to collect or verify during the second day of the visit.

Discussion Guide for Interviewing Clients and Family Members

The paragraphs below provide suggestions for how reviewers can start their discussions with clients and family members.

“Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. My name is (NAME) and I work for (REVIEWER’S AGENCY NAME). We’re working with (NAME OF PROGRAM TO BE REVIEWED) to learn more about the way they provide services for people who are interested in working or further developing their careers.

What you tell me will be used to make suggestions on ways to improve services to support people who want to go to work. We’ll meet for about 15 to 30 minutes and talk about the services (YOU/YOUR FAMILY MEMBER) have received.

Your participation in the interview is voluntary; you don’t have to do this if you don’t want to. Your decision to participate will not affect the services (YOU/YOUR FAMILY MEMBER) receive(s). Also, what we talk about today is confidential and anonymous, which means that no information that could identify you will be collected or included in the summary report of our visit to this agency. The only exception is if you report that you may be about to hurt yourself or someone else. In these cases, we’ll discuss the situation and I may be required by law to report it.

If there’s a question you don’t want to answer, you do not have to answer it, and we can stop at any time. The benefit to participating in this interview is that the information you provide can help us to improve employment and education services for people who receive services here. Do you have any questions before we begin?”

Tailor Terminology to the Agency

Adopt terms used by agency staff to improve communication. For example, if staff uses the term *client* for the person receiving IPS supported employment services, use that term. Similarly, if practitioners are referred to as *clinicians*, use that title.

During the fidelity visit, ask permission to take notes from the people with whom you are meeting. Note-taking will help you in scoring items and developing the summary report.

If discrepancies between sources occur, query the IPS supervisor, other practitioners, or clients to gain an accurate assessment of the program's performance in a particular area. For example, regarding the fidelity item **Zero Exclusion Criteria**, the IPS specialists may report that all clients have access to employment services, while some of the client records reviewed indicate that people with worsening symptoms are discouraged from making plans to work. In that situation, reviewers ask the IPS supervisor and IPS specialists to help them understand what is in the records.

Completing the Fidelity Visit

Check for missing information. The scale is designed to be filled out completely. All fidelity items must be scored – none may be marked “not applicable.” If information was not obtained at the time of the site visit, reviewers should collect it soon after the review.

Before leaving the agency, tell the IPS supervisor that the IPS Supported Employment Fidelity Scale form and a report will be sent within two to three weeks. About one week after sending the report, the reviewers will connect with the IPS supervisor (and others identified by the agency) in a prearranged teleconference to discuss questions about the report.

Thank all people interviewed or observed during the day.

CHAPTER

4

Consensus Scoring

Follow up on missing information, if any, by contacting the IPS supervisor. Reviewers should independently rate the Supported Employment Fidelity Scale within a day or two of the visit. Consensus scoring refers to a meeting that occurs within a week of the visit during which reviewers compare their ratings, resolve any disagreements, and decide upon final ratings. They discuss strengths to note in the report and recommendations for improvement. Reviewers classify an observation about program implementation under the most appropriate fidelity item. Finally, reviewers tally the item scores and determine which level of implementation was achieved. A score sheet can be found at the back of the Supported Employment Fidelity Scale to help with this. Watch the module on consensus scoring on the DVD, “Successful Supported Employment Fidelity Reviews,” to observe how two reviewers reach consensus.

Reviewers may find that some items are difficult to score. Below are tips for accurate scoring:

1. Re-read the anchors on the scale for each item. Do not rely on memory. Never score a program without referring to the complete fidelity scale and this manual.
2. When it is difficult to select a score, look up the item in this manual to see if a similar example is provided. If not, read the rationale or description for each item to focus on critical elements of the item.
3. Remember that the difference between scores of 1 and 2 is not especially critical as these scores mean that the item has not been implemented. Avoid spending a great deal of time deliberating between 1 and 2, or between 2 and 3. The difference between a score of 3 and 4, and between 4 and 5 is important. In these instances reviewers carefully consider all of the sources of information available.
4. Use objective information whenever possible. For example, when rating the item **Diversity of Job Types**, do not rely on a subjective impression based on a quick scan of the list of jobs, but instead methodically count the job types that are repeated on the list.

5. When objective information is not available, use more than one source of information. For example, when IPS specialists say that a local work incentives (benefits) counselor is available to meet with clients, reviewers read written benefits planning reports and review (if available) a list of people who have received benefits planning. They ask clients how they learned about the effect of earned income on benefits and talk to the state Vocational Rehabilitation counselor about the quality of benefits planning.
6. Different sources of information sometimes provide conflicting information. For example, a supervisor reports that she provides field mentoring (side-by-side coaching while specialists meet with employers) for all new IPS specialists. However, one IPS specialist who has been in her position for three months reports that she has not had any field mentoring while another IPS specialist has had field mentoring with the supervisor only one time. The specialists likely remember talking to employers with their supervisor. The supervisor may have planned to provide more field mentoring than she actually completed. If there is no documentation of field mentoring, reviewers would score the item **Role of Employment Supervisor** based upon the reports of the IPS specialists.
7. Guidance about scoring is available at www.DartmouthIPS.org. Select FAQs from the menu at the top of the page, then “Ask Us a Question.” Submit your question and you will receive a response within a few days.
8. Some anchors require multiple components to be present. For example, when an IPS unit includes two full-time IPS specialists who report to one supervisor and who meet weekly to discuss client progress and share job leads, most of the criteria for the item **Vocational Unit** are met. But, for a score of 5, the IPS specialists must also provide coverage for each other’s caseloads. All of the elements of an anchor must be present; otherwise reviewers choose a lower score.
9. IPS specialists on the same IPS team may perform their jobs differently. For some items, reviewers average the scores of each specialist to calculate an overall item score. For example, if caseload sizes are 30, 20 and 25, then the average caseload size is 25 and the score is 4. Refer to item descriptions in Chapter 9 to see which items are scored this way.
10. Make consistent ratings from one fidelity review to the next if there has not been any change. For example, if the score was 3 for the item **Zero Exclusion Criteria** and at the next fidelity visit the reviewers determine that no changes have been made, the score is still 3. Reviewers should not lower the score because improvements were not made. An exception is when reviewers score incorrectly on an earlier review (see #11).
11. Acknowledge past scoring mistakes and score as accurately as possible. Occasionally reviewers realize that they gave an inaccurate score in a previous fidelity report. In this situation the reviewers make a comment in the fidelity

- report acknowledging the wrong score from the previous review and use accurate scoring going forward.
12. Score all items using the scale anchors listed on the Fidelity Scale. When items are difficult to score, reviewers must choose between two scores because the scale requires you choose a whole number. For example, if IPS specialists make an average of 5.6 employer contacts per week, the rule is to round down and treat this as 5 contacts. On the item's 5-anchor scale, it would be incorrect to score 4.5. The score would be a 4.
 13. Do not adjust scores for local factors. Occasionally, program staff or agency administrators explain that services must be provided differently because of local circumstances. This information may be referenced in the narrative but reviewers make scores using the scale without adjustments.

Several fidelity items rely on documentation. For these items, reviewers ask to review the documentation. For example, the item **Executive Team Support for SE** requires that agency leaders review the IPS supported employment program as a part of the quality assurance process. If it cannot be demonstrated that the IPS program is part of the quality assurance process through reports or meeting minutes, then reviewers do not score 5 for the item **Executive Team Support for SE**. A list of required documentation is below.

Required agency documentation/data collection:

- Quality assurance reports or meeting minutes that include a review of program components using the Supported Employment Fidelity Scale (item **Executive Team Support for SE**).
- Quarterly rate of competitive employment for all adults with serious mental illness served by the agency (item **Agency Focus on Competitive Employment**).
- Intake forms with questions about interest in employment (item **Agency Focus on Competitive Employment**).
- Annual treatment plans, mental health assessments or other annual forms, including questions about interest in employment (item **Agency Focus on Competitive Employment**).

Required IPS supported employment program documentation/data collection:

- Days from each client's first appointment with an IPS specialist to first in-person employer contact by either the client or IPS specialist. If the IPS supervisor does not track this information, reviewers do not score higher than 4 on the item **Rapid Job Search for Competitive Jobs**.
- Job titles for all jobs currently held by IPS clients. Names of businesses for jobs obtained in the past six months (item **Diversity of Job Types**).

- Names of businesses for all jobs obtained in the past six months (item **Diversity of Employers**).
- Comprehensive career profiles including information from various sources, (mental health practitioners, family members, school records, and/or mental health records) and updates regarding each new job and educational experience (item **Ongoing, Work-based Vocational Assessment**).
- Employer contact logs for each IPS specialist for two months prior to the fidelity visit (item **Job Development - Frequent Employer Contact**).
- Job search plans in client records (item **Individualized Job Search**).
- Job support plans in client records (item **Individualized Follow-along Supports**).
- Documentation of outreach attempts in client records for people who have disengaged from the program (item **Assertive Engagement and Outreach by Integrated Team Members**).

Some record keeping is helpful but not required. Examples are listed below:

- Meeting minutes for state Vocational Rehabilitation-IPS unit meetings may be recommended, but a lack of minutes does not affect the score.
- Copies of field mentoring logs are helpful to supervisors, but are not required for a high score on item **Role of the Employment Supervisor**.
- Meeting minutes for IPS steering committees are helpful to review, but not required to score **Executive Team Support for SE**.
- Progress notes that indicate communication between mental health practitioners and IPS specialists are not required for a high score on item **Integration of Rehabilitation with Mental Health thru Frequent Team Member Contact**.
- It is helpful to save benefits planning reports in client records, but it is not required for item **Work Incentives Planning**.
- Documentation regarding discussions with people about disclosure (e.g., progress notes, disclosure worksheet) is helpful to understand how issues about disclosure are addressed for item **Disclosure**.
- It is not required for programs to collect data related to how much time IPS specialists spend in community locations for item **Community-based Services**.

Some ratings are based only on the IPS team, while others are rated for the entire agency or a specific position. For example, item **Zero Exclusion Criteria** is rated based upon the practices of all practitioners at the agency who work with clients. More examples are in the table below:

Fidelity item	Use information from:
Integration of Rehabilitation with Mental Health thru Frequent Team Member Contact	IPS specialists, IPS peer specialists, mental health practitioners, the IPS supervisor and mental health supervisors.
Collaboration between Employment Specialists and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors	IPS unit members and state Vocational Rehabilitation counselors.
Zero Exclusion Criteria	All practitioners at the agency including mental health practitioners, IPS unit members, agency intake workers, psychiatrists, nurses, residential workers, staff from other employment programs, day treatment program staff, clients, and family members interviewed.
Agency Focus on Competitive Employment	Entire agency staff including leadership team, all practitioners, clients and family members interviewed.
Executive Team Support for Supported Employment	Agency administrators including executive director/chief executive officer (CEO), quality assurance manager, clinical director, and medical director. Also, the IPS supervisor, IPS specialists, IPS peer specialists, and mental health practitioners.
Work Incentives Planning	Benefits counselors, IPS specialists, clients and state Vocational Rehabilitation counselors.

**Assertive Engagement
and Outreach by
Integrated Treatment
Team**

IPS specialists and mental health treatment team members.

CHAPTER

5

Conducting Reviews When IPS and Mental Health Services are Provided by Separate Agencies

It is recommended that IPS supported employment programs are part of the agency that provides mental health services, though this is not always feasible. For example, an IPS program may be part of a vocational or rehabilitation agency, separate from a local mental health agency where IPS clients receive mental health services. In this case, reviewers assess both agencies during the fidelity visit and follow the guidelines in this chapter.

In the fidelity report, reviewers recommend that IPS specialists' offices are located at the agency that provides mental health care, rather than with the agency that employs the staff for the IPS program. In other words, IPS specialists' *only* offices are located at a mental health agency even if their supervisor is located at the rehabilitation agency. The purpose is to ensure good coordination of IPS and mental health (or other primary) services.

Some fidelity items are rated based on information from both agencies. For example, reviewers read client records at both agencies and interview staff at both agencies. Please see the table below.

Fidelity Item	Fidelity Activities that Pertain to the Fidelity Item
Integration of Rehabilitation with Mental Health thru Frequent Team Member Contact	Interview IPS and mental health practitioners. Observe at least one mental health treatment team meeting at the mental health agency. Read client records as a possible source of information about whether employment/education and mental health services are integrated.

**Zero Exclusion
Criteria**

Interview IPS specialists, IPS peer specialists, IPS supervisor, and other practitioners at the mental health agency, including clinical supervisor(s), case managers/service coordinators or counselors, psychiatrist or medical director.
Review client records at the mental health agency to determine if mental health practitioners encourage work for all people.

**Agency Focus on
Competitive
Employment**

At least annually, review client records at the mental health agency to determine if people are asked about their interest in work at least annually.
Look for displays or written information about work and IPS services at both the mental health and vocational agencies.
Determine whether the mental health agency staff supports ways for clients to share work stories with other clients and agency staff at least twice each year.
Determine whether the mental health agency measures the rate of competitive employment at least quarterly for all people with serious mental illness receiving mental health services and shares that information with staff. Ask mental health treatment staff what percent of people with serious mental illness at their agency are competitively employed.

**Executive Team
Support for SE**

Ask executive directors at BOTH agencies and the clinical director at the mental health agency how IPS differs from other employment programs (IPS supported employment principles).
Review the agency quality assurance process at BOTH agencies to determine if IPS fidelity is monitored.
Ask if members from the executive teams at BOTH agencies participate on the IPS steering committee. Preferably, more than one person from each agency would participate.
Learn how the agency executive directors at BOTH agencies communicate how IPS supports their agency missions and how they articulate specific goals for IPS and/or employment annually.
Ask if the IPS supervisor shares information about IPS barriers and facilitators with the executive director at the vocational agency twice each year, and also at steering committee meetings.

CHAPTER

6

IPS Peer Specialists

The role of peers in IPS has expanded in recent years. Peer specialists refer to IPS unit members who have similar life experiences to people who receive IPS services. Peers have a unique ability to inspire hope in others by sharing how they overcame obstacles to achieve their own career goals.

The job duties of peer specialists vary by location. Some peers help other people consider employment. For example, at one mental health agency, a peer meets with every new client of the agency. She shares how she found work that she loves in spite of past legal problems, substance abuse problems, and years of unemployment. She also describes the IPS program so that when people feel ready to pursue work, they know what services are available. Other peers are members of IPS teams and augment the work of IPS specialists. They help engage people in IPS services, talk to people about their short and long-term career goals, help people remain hopeful about work, help people obtain identification to be hired, help people learn transportation routes to a job, help job seekers with job applications, and provide additional supports. There are probably many different job descriptions for peers in the U.S. and other countries. The peer support specialist role is to augment IPS services, and not replace the job duties of the IPS specialist.

Many mental health agencies also hire peer specialists to help with services other than IPS. This manual does not refer to those positions. The sample questions that are listed in the fidelity items for peers for the fidelity review refer to peer support specialists who are part of the IPS team, unless otherwise noted.

Some IPS programs hire people with lived experiences as employment specialists. People in these positions have identical responsibilities and salaries to other employment specialists on the team. The difference is that they may occasionally share personal experiences to help the students and workers on their caseloads. Their experiences are

considered to be an additional qualification for the job. When we write about IPS peers, we are not referring to employment specialists who happen to have lived experiences.

If peers provide the full range of employment services to a caseload of people (peers operate as IPS specialists), reviewers use information from peers in the same way that they use information from IPS specialists when scoring items. For example, they would include the caseload sizes of peers when calculating the score for the fidelity item **Caseload Size**. In this situation, reviewers may also ask why people in peer positions are not simply hired as IPS specialists.

As a general rule, the inclusion of peers on the team usually will not affect the fidelity score either way because the IPS supported employment fidelity scale does not measure the role of peer support specialist. Future updates of this scale should include the role of peer support specialists based on the emerging evidence.

Highlighting the positive contributions of peer support staff should be written into the narrative of the fidelity report. For example, a peer support specialist who meets with new agency clients as part of intake is helping to increase access to IPS, and it should be noted under the item **Zero Exclusion**. On the other hand, if a peer support specialist is functioning at cross purposes to IPS fidelity, it should be noted as well. For example, if a peer support specialist advises clients to start with volunteer jobs because in her experience working a competitive job is challenging, it should be noted in the report under the item **Ongoing, Work-based Vocational Assessment**. Although many program staff report that IPS peer specialists improve services, peer positions are not necessary for good fidelity to IPS supported employment. Remember that the full-fledged employment specialist who has lived experience is treated like any other IPS specialist in the fidelity review process.

CHAPTER

7

Writing the Report

The fidelity review team determines which person will write the first draft of the fidelity report. Typically, the lead reviewer takes this role and sends the draft version to other fidelity reviewers for their comments and suggestions within a week or two of the review. A fidelity software template is available to create a report, which includes sample comments and recommendations for common situations that can be used in addition to those of the reviewers (www.dartmouthips.org/resources/trainers/ips-supported-employment-fidelity).

It is important to complete fidelity scoring and writing at least a draft report soon after the site visit while one's memory is fresh.

A final version of the fidelity report is sent to the agency contact person within two to three weeks of the fidelity visit (sooner is even better). The feedback is most relevant when it is received close to the time of the visit. The fidelity process loses credibility when a report is late because some changes may have already been made by the time the report is received, or because the next fidelity review may be scheduled soon after the report is received.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the fidelity report is the mechanism for explaining the scores on the fidelity scale and providing interpretation of the assessment, highlighting both strengths and weaknesses. The report should be informative, factual, and constructive. The recipients of this report will vary according to the purposes, but typically include the key administrators involved in the fidelity visit (e.g., agency executive director, IPS supervisor).

The purpose of the report is not only to provide scores, but also to give recognition and encouragement to agency staff about what they are doing well and to identify areas where they could improve. The report helps agency leaders and staff understand how services are congruent, or not, with the evidence-based approach. To that end, reviewers include

factual information about how services are provided. For example, quotes (without names), a list of caseload sizes, information from client records such as the number of community visits found in a sample of records, etc. Reviewers compare and contrast high fidelity services to current services accordingly.

Reviewers should provide evidence for their scores—it is not sufficient to indicate a global impression. The burden of proof is on the reviewers. For example, if the score for item **Community-based Services** is 3, reviewers explain that although IPS specialists reported being in the community 65% of the time, when IPS specialists shared their recent work schedules with the reviewers, it appeared that specialists were spending less than 40% of their time in the community, and client records indicated that specialists usually met with clients in their offices. Reviewers use multiple examples and quotes from people interviewed (without identifying names) to back up scores in the fidelity report.

Include recommendations for each item scored lower than 5 (i.e., good implementation). It is also helpful to include recommendations for items that have been fully implemented if there are plans to change service delivery. For example:

“Discontinue plans to develop a marketing position on the IPS team. Instead, continue to require each IPS specialist to provide job development services to the people on his caseload. Provide IPS specialists with additional training on building employer relationships.”

Specific and measurable recommendations are best. For example:

“Discuss the possible benefits and risks of disclosure of a disability with all people served.”

“Include consumers and family members in the IPS steering committee membership.”

IPS team leaders will also respond more favorably to recommendations that are within their control and that they see as realistic. When there is a large gap between current practice and the fidelity standards recommending some initial small steps toward full fidelity may be more attainable than making changes rapidly.

See the sample fidelity report at the end of this manual (in Fidelity Tools) for more examples.

Begin the report with a summary of the fidelity review because some agency leaders may not read the entire document. Start with program strengths or positive changes since the last review. Next, describe a few critical areas for improvement. Highlighting a few key recommendations in the summary may be more effective than a long list of recommended changes. Finally, list the contact information of the reviewers. If the reviewers also are IPS trainers and consultants, they may offer to help the agency with next steps in implementation or program sustainment.

Two examples of fidelity reports are included in the IPS Supported Employment Fidelity Kit. Another example is in Fidelity Tools at the end of this manual. Read the reports to learn how to comment on situations and write recommendations.

After multiple reviews of one IPS program, it is useful to create an Excel spreadsheet from which a graph of the individual item scores and the total fidelity scores over time are displayed. Add graphs of fidelity scores to the fidelity report. Suggest that IPS supervisors share the graphs in leadership or steering committee meetings to demonstrate progress and identify areas for improvement.

When scoring the items that include four or five components, indicate which components were fulfilled and which components need improvement. An example of how to report a fidelity item with components is below.

7. Agency Focus on Competitive Employment	
Agency promotes work through multiple strategies. Agency intake includes questions about interest in competitive employment. Agency displays written postings (e.g., brochures, bulletin boards, posters) about employment and supported employment services. The focus should be with the agency programs that provide services to adults with severe mental illness. Agency supports ways for clients to share work stories with other clients and staff. Agency measures rate of competitive employment and shares this information with agency leaders and staff.	Rating - 3
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agency intake includes questions about interest in employment. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agency includes questions about interest in employment on all annual (or semi-annual) assessment or treatment plan reviews. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agency displays written postings (e.g. brochures, bulletin boards, posters) about working and supported employment services, in lobby and other waiting areas.	

Agency supports ways for clients to share work stories with other clients and staff (e.g., agency-wide employment recognition events, in-service training, peer support groups, agency newsletter articles, invited speakers at client treatment groups, etc.) at least twice a year.

Agency measures rate of competitive employment on at least a quarterly basis and shares outcomes with agency leadership and staff.

Comments:

The annual treatment plan and assessment do not include standardized questions about interest in employment. The agency measures the rate of competitive employment for all adults with serious mental illness on an annual basis, but does not share that information with practitioners. Also, the definition for competitive employment used by agency leaders is “any paid employment.”

Recommendations:

- Add questions about interest in employment to the annual treatment plan and/or annual mental health assessment.
- Measure *competitive* employment for all adults with serious mental illness. Competitive jobs are not positions that are set aside for people with disabilities. Competitive jobs pay at least minimum wage (and the same wage as others who do the same work). The worker is paid directly from his employer. A social service/rehabilitation agency does not supervise or pay wages. Competitive jobs do not include time limits imposed by the rehabilitation/mental health agency.
- Share information about rates of competitive employment with agency leadership and staff quarterly.

CHAPTER

8

Help Agency Leaders Use the Report to Improve Services

Agency leaders often have questions about scores or recommendations in the fidelity report. Reviewers schedule a meeting or phone call with people from the agency a week or two after the report has been delivered, which gives them time to process the report and identify the items they would like to discuss. Some people prefer to focus on areas with low scores, while others wish to talk briefly about each item on the scale. Schedule at least one hour to talk about the report. During the meeting, acknowledge efforts that have been made to improve fidelity and also offer specific suggestions for items. For example:

“We observed that follow-along services have improved since the last review. The team is working together during the IPS unit meetings to think of strategies that are strengths-based and individualized. They are also asking the mental health team for ideas to provide good job supports.”

“We noted that five people are working for the same cleaning company. Although those are competitive jobs, they did not appear to be individualized. For example, one person interviewed said that he does not like to clean. Some people were looking for several different types of jobs simultaneously and it was unclear to us how each person’s preferences matched the jobs sought. What do you think may be getting in the way of individualized job searches?”

“When clients share their stories about work and career development, many practitioners and clients become enthusiastic about IPS, which is why item Agency Focus on Competitive Employment includes this component. At one agency, the stories were laminated and placed in waiting rooms. At another

agency, working people spoke at treatment groups such as social skills groups or therapy groups.”

“Many program leaders find that they are more successful engaging young people when they make extra efforts. For example, they alter waiting rooms to have material that is developed just for young people or emphasize meeting people at their schools or where they like to spend time in the community.”

Reviewers encourage agency leaders to draft an IPS fidelity action plan based on recommendations in the report. Examples of fidelity action plans are included in the IPS Supported Employment Fidelity Kit. Action plans are discussed in IPS steering committee meetings so that committee members can suggest strategies to improve IPS implementation. Remind agency leaders that good employment outcomes are correlated to good fidelity.

CHAPTER

9

Supported Employment Fidelity Items

This section includes specific information about each fidelity item, information about how reviewers obtain information for each item, examples of how to rate different situations, and sample questions that reviewers can ask stakeholders. In addition to interviews, information is gathered from observation of mental health treatment team meetings, observation of the vocational unit meeting, shadowing IPS specialists as they meet with employers, and reviewing client records and program data.

Staffing

1. Caseload Size

Employment specialists have individual employment caseloads. The maximum caseload for any full-time employment specialist is 20 or fewer clients.

Possible sources of information for this item include:

- Caseload lists from IPS specialists
- Caseload lists from the IPS supervisor
- Interviews with the IPS specialists
- Interview with the IPS supervisor

Rationale: Research has demonstrated that employment specialists with large caseloads have difficulty monitoring regular contact with clients and meeting other fidelity standards. Caseload sizes of 20 people or less are manageable and allow IPS specialists time to provide effective employment services to people who are in different stages of working on goals for employment and school.

Reviewers learn whether each IPS specialist has a discrete caseload. In some programs, IPS specialists do not have discrete caseloads. They meet with people as they show interest and when clients stop showing interest in employment they do not meet with them. Or, the IPS team has a caseload and all IPS specialists work with the team caseload. If the IPS specialist does not have a discrete caseload list and does not meet with some clients regularly, and does not complete documentation for people on his caseload (e.g., job search plan, career profile), a rating of 3 or less is indicated. IPS specialists do not carry inactive caseloads.

Ask IPS specialists for caseload lists. Also ask the IPS supervisor for caseload lists. When there are discrepancies, ask the team to help resolve the differences between the lists.

Many IPS specialists keep both a caseload list of people who are participating in the program and a list of people who do not meet regularly with them. IPS specialists should have just one caseload list. The following guidelines will help programs define caseloads in a consistent manner:

- A person who receives monthly outreach attempts, even if the outreach attempts are not successful, is considered to be on an IPS specialist caseload.
- A person who receives monthly services from the IPS specialist is considered to be on the specialist's caseload.
- A working person who calls the IPS specialist occasionally (less than monthly) to say hello and update the specialist about her job is not considered to be on the caseload.
- A person's IPS case should be closed after three months without services or outreach attempts. For example, when someone cannot work for six months because of a medical problem, the person's case is closed from IPS services and is no longer on the caseload.
- If a person has been referred to an IPS specialist, but has not met the specialist yet, that person is not on the caseload.

Examples

Caseload sizes usually vary by specialist, for example, caseloads of 25, 19 and 20 people per specialist. The average caseload is 21 people, and therefore the rating is 4 ($25 + 19 + 20 = 64$. 64 divided by $3 = 21$).

Caseload sizes are small (e.g., 10 people). Reviewers indicate in the fidelity report that the IPS specialists are underutilized and make a recommendation to increase caseloads. They score this item 5 because the caseload size meets the definition of 20 or fewer people.

The IPS supervisor carries a caseload, but reviewers do not include that number when averaging the IPS specialists' caseloads. They follow this guideline even when the supervisor spends half or more of her time as an IPS specialist.

Sample questions for IPS specialists

How many people are on your caseload?

Can you please share your caseload list with me?

Are there some people on your caseload who are inactive? How do you define inactive?
Are those people included in the total number on your caseload?

Are you responsible for writing employment plans for inactive clients?

How do you decide when someone's IPS case should be closed?

Sample questions for IPS supervisors

Do you keep an updated caseload list for each IPS specialist? If so, would you share that with me?

Is there a waiting list for the IPS program?

Why are caseload sizes low? Have you talked to mental health practitioners about the reasons they do not refer more people?

What are the guidelines for when a person's case should be closed from the IPS program?

To calculate the score for this item:

Add the number of people who are assigned to each specialist and divide by the number of full-time equivalent specialists (full time = 1, half time = 0.5, etc.).
Score using the 1-5 anchors as appropriate.

2. Employment Services Staff

Employment specialists provide only employment services.

Possible sources of information for this item include:

- Interviews with mental health practitioners
- Interviews with IPS specialists

- IPS peer specialist interviews
- Interview with the IPS supervisor
- Interview(s) with a clinical supervisor
- Client interviews
- Client record reviews

Rationale: Practitioners who have dual roles (both vocational and clinical responsibilities) often focus on mental health emergencies, housing crises, etc., and do not have time to connect with employers or develop other skills needed to become effective IPS specialists.

When meeting with different people during the fidelity visit, reviewers listen for whether the IPS specialists have non-vocational duties. For example, a mental health worker may report that the IPS specialist is leading a woman's group or helping someone find housing.

IPS specialists keep the mental health treatment team focused on employment but can contribute as the other team members, for example, by dropping off medication when meeting someone to talk about her job. But the IPS specialist has a protected position and does not spend more than one to two hours per week (four or five percent of a full-time position) on non-employment activities. This guideline relates to staff roles on assertive community treatment teams too.

Most IPS specialists report that they occasionally help with case management activities. Reviewers ask follow-up questions to determine how much time is spent in that way.

“When was the last time you provided case management services? Did you do any work to help out a service coordinator last week? What did you do? How about this week?”

They also read progress notes in client records to learn about the types of services provided.

Another strategy is to ask IPS specialists to refer to their appointment books to describe their activities from the previous week. To watch a reviewer using this strategy, view the module, “Job Development Observation” on the IPS Fidelity DVD in the Fidelity Review Kit.

In small mental health agencies (serving 60 to 140 consumers), the organizational leaders sometimes assign other job duties to the IPS specialist because the IPS program is not large enough for a full IPS caseload. For example, an IPS specialist divides his time between case management and employment services. In this case, reviewers rate 1 for item **Employment Services Staff**. Although the split position may be practical, the fidelity standard remains constant and is not adjusted for different situations. (In this example, reviewers would also select a low score for item **Vocational Unit** because there is only one IPS specialist.

Education supports are part of employment services when the educational program is related to a person's career goal. For example, if an IPS specialist provides supports while a person trains to be a phlebotomist, reviewers do not lower the score. But if a specialist provides supports to someone taking an art class that is not related to a degree/certificate to further the person's career, those supports are not employment services. IPS specialists who work with young people may spend a significant portion of their time on education supports.

Many IPS teams hire people with lived experience of mental illness as peer specialists to assist with engagement and support. If peers provide non-employment services, the score for this item is not lowered.

IPS specialists routinely meet with mental health practitioners and their clients who have not applied for disability benefits. The purpose of the meetings is to help people consider employment rather than benefits. The IPS specialists describe how they help people with jobs and school/training programs. This is an employment service.

Examples

On a team of three IPS specialists, one full-time specialist spends one day each week working in the day treatment program, but the other two full-time specialists *only* provide employment and educational assistance. Therefore, the first IPS specialist spends 80% of her time providing employment services and the other two specialists spend 100% of their time providing employment services. Reviewers find the average: $80+100+100 = 280$. 280 divided by $3 = 93.33$ (or 93%). The item is rated 4.

An IPS specialist spends a day each week conducting paper and pencil vocational tests and the rest of the week on supported employment activities. The score for this item is 5 because all of the activities are related to employment, even though vocational tests are not consistent with IPS services. However, reviewers do not score 5 on item **Ongoing, Work-based Vocational Assessment**.

An example of good fidelity is an IPS specialist who reports that she occasionally helps with case management activities (less than 5% of her work week). She says that in the previous week a client requested assistance with documentation for his housing program. Client record reviews also indicate that she spends almost all of her time on employment and education activities. The item is rated 5.

An IPS specialist occasionally leads a substance abuse group when other practitioners are not available. During the past two months she has facilitated the group three times. All other activities are employment. Reviewers rate 5 because less than 4% of her time is spent on non-employment activity. (Hours worked per month for a full-time specialist = 160. For two months = 320. Group time was approximately 4.5 hours during the past two months. 4.5 divided by $320 = 0.01$ or 1%.)

An IPS specialist reports that she helps people with housing and other basic needs because, “If people don’t have housing and food, they can’t work.” Reviewers explain in the report that IPS uses a team approach in which case managers/service coordinators help people with their living situations and IPS specialists focus on employment. The score is based on the amount of time that IPS specialists devote to non-employment activities, regardless of whether there is another position available to help with those services. Therefore, reviewers estimated that both of the IPS specialists spend about 50% of their time on employment services. The item is rated 2.

Sample questions for IPS specialists

Are you responsible for any duties at the agency other than employment and education? Do you help with groups, day treatment services, or transportation for medical appointments? How often? Did you perform any of those activities last week?

Are you ever asked to carryout case management services? For example, have you been asked to drive someone to a food bank for donated food, help someone find housing, drive someone to doctor appointments, manage a mental health crisis, help someone apply for disability benefits? When was the last time? How often does this occur?

Is there anyone on your caseload who does not have a case manager/service coordinator? What happens when this person needs case management services?

I am interested in learning more about your job and understanding what a typical day is like for you. Can you show me in your datebook what you did last Tuesday? What time did you start work that day? What did you do first? Where was that meeting? And what did you do next? What time was that?

Do you ever find that case manager/service coordinator caseloads are so high that you help them out? What is an example? When was the last time that happened?

Sample questions for case managers/service coordinators/therapists

Do IPS specialists ever help you out, for example, taking someone to a doctor’s appointment, helping someone with housing, or taking someone to the grocery store? When was the last time? Do they help on a regular basis?

Sample questions for IPS peer specialists

Please describe your duties. How are your duties different from the IPS specialist’s?

Sample questions for IPS supervisors

What types of work do the IPS peer specialists do? (Reviewers ask to understand how peers fit in the vocational unit, but they do not lower the score if the peers provide non-employment duties.)

When was the last time that an IPS specialist helped a client with something that was not directly related to school, getting a job or keeping a job?

To calculate the score for this item:

Determine the percentage of time each IPS specialist provides employment services. Add the percentages and divide by the number of IPS specialists. Score using the 1-5 anchors as appropriate.

3. Vocational Generalists

Each employment specialist carries out all phases of employment service, including intake, engagement, assessment, job placement, job coaching, and follow-along supports before step down to less intensive employment support from another mental health practitioner.

Possible sources of information for this item include:

- Interviews with the IPS specialists
- Interviews with IPS peers
- Interviews with clients
- Client record reviews
- Interviews with mental health practitioners
- Observation of the vocational unit meeting and a mental health treatment team meeting

Rationale: During research studies, people were most likely to drop out of services when asked to transfer from one employment specialist to another, for example, when different people provided different parts of the employment service (e.g., job search and job support). Many clients value the relationships that they form with IPS specialists and do not want to transition to new practitioners. Employers also seem to prefer working with a single employment specialist throughout the employment process.

Reviewers listen throughout the different interviews and team meetings about what services the IPS specialists provide. Some employment supervisors assign different staff

members to carry out different functions of the service, making it necessary for clients to work with more than one specialist. For example, one team member may provide job development for everyone, while other team members provide intake, vocational planning, and education and job supports. This approach is ineffective because clients sometimes drop out of services when they are expected to transition from one specialist to another. Also, IPS specialists provide individualized services to people they know well, but in this example, the person who only carries out job development may not know all clients well.

One exception to the vocational generalist guideline is that some agencies have a work incentives planner (benefits counselor) for all IPS supported employment clients. The rationale for this exception is that work incentives planning requires detailed information that is continually updated. An example of good benefits planner training is Certified Work Incentives Counselors (CWIC) training provided by Virginia Commonwealth University. Most agency administrators are not able to offer that level of training to all IPS specialists.

Examples

An IPS supervisor (or another designated person) is responsible for meeting all people newly referred to the IPS program before assigning each person to an IPS specialist. In this case, the score is not higher than 4 because the IPS specialist is not engaging people directly from the referral. Clients should not have to meet with multiple practitioners in order to receive IPS services. The assigned IPS specialist should complete intake with the person referred.

One person on the team is the lead job developer. The supervisor explains that one person is the marketer for the program, but that IPS specialists also conduct job development for job seekers on their caseloads. Reviewers determine whether each specialist conducts job development on a weekly basis (for instance, six in-person hiring manager contacts each week). If they are, and reviewers believe that the marketer is simply augmenting IPS specialists' efforts, the score may be 5. However, reviewers also listen to whether the marketer is providing client-specific job development or if he is simply focused on job openings. It is probably difficult for the marketer to provide individualized job development for a large number of people whom he does not know well. Therefore, the score for **Individualized Job Search** may be affected by the marketing position.

One IPS specialist carries out all six phases of employment services (score 5). A second IPS specialist provides four phases, including intake, engagement, assessment, and follow-along supports (score 3). A third IPS specialist provides only job development (score 3). Calculation: $5 + 3 + 3 = 11$ divided by $3 = 3.6$. The score is 3 (because the calculated value for a rating is rounded down).

When IPS specialists refer people to different vocational programs (e.g., other vocational programs within the center or the local area), rather than providing direct services. Reviewers assign a score of 2.

Sample questions for IPS specialists

If a person is referred to you, are you the first person from the IPS team to meet that person?

For the people on your caseload, who conducts the career profile? The job search activities? On-the-job training, if that is needed? Job or educational supports?

Do you ever refer people to other vocational programs? Which ones? How many times in the past three months? How would you decide to make a referral to another program?

Sample questions for IPS peer specialists

What IPS services do you provide? Does anyone else provide those services?

When would a person work with you alone, and not with an IPS specialist at the same time?

Sample questions for the IPS supervisor

Are there any specialized positions on the IPS team? Is any one IPS specialist responsible for a particular activity, such as job development?

Does your team ever refer people to other employment programs? Would you share an example of when this happened?

Sample questions for clients

Who was the first person you met from the IPS program? Who helped you find a job?

Who provided job supports? Who helped you select a career? Who helped with education or training?

To calculate the score for this item:

Determine the score for each IPS specialist using the anchors 1 - 5.
Add the scores and divide by the number of IPS specialists. Round down (e.g., 3.6 → 3).
Score using the 1-5 anchors as appropriate.

Organization

1. Integration of Rehabilitation with Mental Health Treatment thru Team Assignment

Employment specialists are part of up to two mental health treatment teams from which at least 90% of the employment specialist's caseload is comprised.

Possible sources of information for this item include:

- Data from the IPS supervisor
- Interview with the IPS supervisor
- Interviews with IPS specialists
- Interview with mental health treatment team supervisors
- Interview with the agency's clinical director

Rationale: There is a limit to the number of people with whom each IPS specialist can coordinate services if he is to be successful in his other duties. Employment specialists participate in weekly IPS unit meetings, weekly mental health treatment team meetings for each team to which they are assigned, and monthly state Vocational Rehabilitation meetings. In addition, they are asked to communicate with mental health practitioners and Vocational Rehabilitation counselors between meetings. In order for IPS specialists to manage all of these priorities, services are organized so that specialists relate to a small number of referral sources from which their caseload is comprised.

IPS specialists are expected to spend much of their time meeting with clients and employers in community settings. They are also expected to coordinate services with state Vocational Rehabilitation counselors, mental health practitioners, and within their own vocational unit. In order for IPS specialists to manage all of these priorities, services are organized so that specialists relate to a small number of referral sources, from which their caseload is comprised.

Review caseloads with each IPS specialist and ask which mental health treatment team provides mental health services to each person. Score by determining how many teams each IPS specialist is assigned to, and what percent of her clients comes from the assigned teams.

Staff from clubhouses and community rehabilitation providers that coordinate services with other mental health agencies may be unable to improve the score for this item because they do not have control of how services are organized at the other mental health agencies. For example, clubhouse IPS specialists may coordinate employment services with mental health practitioners at a separate agency that does not organize the mental health practitioners into treatment teams (score of 1).

Examples

An agency has three mental health treatment teams and one IPS specialist. The specialist attends each team meeting and receives referrals from all three teams. Thirty percent of her caseload is from the first team, 30% from the second team, and 40% from the third team. The score for this item is 2 because the IPS specialist is attached to three or more teams.

An IPS specialist has eight people on his caseload from Team A, nine people from Team B, and two people from Team C. The score for this item is 4 because 89% of his caseload is from two teams. Calculate the score: Total people on caseload = 19. Number of people on Teams A and B = 17. 17 divided by 19 = .89 or 89%.

An IPS program is part of a rehabilitation agency. Referrals to IPS are from individual mental health practitioners at multiple agencies separate from the rehabilitation agency. The score is 1.

An IPS unit includes three IPS specialists. One specialist is attached to two mental health teams from which 90% of her caseload is comprised (score 5). A second IPS specialist is attached to three mental health teams (score 2). The third specialist is attached to two mental health teams from which 75% of her caseload is comprised (score 4). Calculate the score: $5 + 2 + 4 = 11$; 11 divided by 3 = 3.6 or a score of 3.

An IPS specialist receives referrals from state Vocational Rehabilitation counselors, a managed care organization, and a mental health treatment team. The score is 2 because referrals come from three different teams (even though not all of the teams are mental health treatment teams). However, if 90% of her caseload is from the mental health treatment team, the score is 5.

A mental health agency has 25 mental health practitioners (case managers and therapists) who refer to the IPS program, but the practitioners are not organized into teams. In this case, the score is 2. Reviewers recommend organizing practitioners into teams and assigning an IPS specialist to each team.

A clubhouse provides evidence-based supported employment as part of its array of employment services. In general clubhouses do not provide mental health treatment, and at this clubhouse the three employment specialists are each assigned to two mental health treatment teams at a nearby mental health center from which 90% of their caseloads are comprised. Reviewers score 5.

An agency has only six mental health practitioners who are not organized into teams. Because of the small number of practitioners, it is likely that the IPS specialist is able to coordinate easily with them (they can be considered to be one team). Reviewers recommend that the six mental health practitioners, their supervisor, and the IPS specialist meet weekly. The score is 5. However, until practitioners have weekly meetings, the score for item **Integration of Rehabilitation with Mental Health thru Frequent Team Member Contact** (next item) is lowered.

Note: IPS units that serve other populations (e.g., people with spinal cord injury or other physical disability) will connect with another set of service providers than mental health

practitioners. All references to mental health treatment teams will be changed to the service team for that population.

Sample questions for IPS specialists

Who refers people to you? Anyone else?

Within the mental health agency, who makes referrals to your caseload?

How many people on your caseload do not have a mental health worker from the agency?

Let's review your caseload. Which people do not receive mental health services from Teams A or B (your assigned teams)?

Sample questions for the IPS supervisor

Are the IPS specialists assigned to mental health treatment teams? If so, which specialists work with which teams?

Does the vocational unit receive referrals from other sources than the mental health treatment teams? How many?

Sample questions for the clinical director

Are the mental health practitioners organized into teams? If so, please describe the teams.

To calculate the score for this item:

Determine the score for each IPS specialist using the anchors 1 - 5.
Add the scores and divide by the number of IPS specialists. Round down (e.g., 3.6 → 3).
Score using the 1-5 anchors as appropriate.

2. Integration of Rehabilitation with Mental Health Treatment thru Frequent Team Member Contact

Employment specialists actively participate in weekly mental health treatment team meetings (not replaced by administrative meetings) that discuss individual clients and their employment goals with shared decision-making. The employment specialist's office is in close proximity to (or shared with) their mental health treatment team members. Documentation of mental health treatment and employment services is integrated in a single client chart. Employment specialists help the team think about employment for people who haven't yet been referred to supported employment services.

Components of this item:

- Employment specialist attends weekly mental health treatment team meetings.
- Employment specialist participates actively in treatment team meetings with shared decision-making.
- Employment services documentation (i.e., vocational assessment/career profile, employment plan, progress notes) is integrated into client's mental health treatment record.
- Employment specialist's office is in close proximity to (or shared with) their mental health treatment team members.
- Employment specialist helps the team think about employment for people who haven't yet been referred to supported employment services.

Possible sources of information for this item include:

Observation of mental health treatment team meeting(s)
Client record reviews
Agency tour
Interviews with IPS specialists
Interview with IPS peer
Interviews with mental health practitioners
Interview with mental health treatment team leaders

Rationale: Frequent contact helps practitioners work as a team to assist people with their employment goals. With good integration, clients do not receive conflicting messages from different providers. The goal is for all practitioners to support each person's work and education goals using a team approach.

A mental health treatment team consists of a group of people, such as service coordinators, medication prescribers, peer/recovery specialists, employment/education specialists and others who meet regularly to discuss client progress and make recommendations for improved functioning and quality of life.

Note: IPS units that serve other populations (e.g., people with spinal cord injury or other physical disability) will connect with another set of service providers than mental health practitioners. All references to mental health treatment teams will be changed to the service team for that population.

Observe one or more mental health treatment team meetings, depending upon the number of teams at the agency. For example, if an agency has ten mental health treatment teams, and IPS is implemented on seven of those teams, reviewers observe three or four team meetings. If an agency has five mental health treatment teams, reviewers observe two or three team meetings. Schedule the visit so that reviewers will be present during mental health treatment team meetings.

Clubhouses and community rehabilitation providers may coordinate mental health treatment with other mental health agencies. The goal is to coordinate services as much as possible knowing that agencies may be unable to make changes at each other's agencies that would improve the score.

COMPONENT 1: Employment specialist attends weekly mental health treatment team meetings.

Reviewers ask how often IPS specialists attend the meeting and whether they participate in the entire meeting.

If the mental health treatment team meets daily, such as assertive community treatment (ACT) teams, it is recommended that the IPS specialist attend one or two meetings each week to receive credit for this component.

The mental health treatment team meeting agenda can affect the score. Some agencies have individual treatment planning meetings in which the entire meeting is devoted to one or two people. In these cases, reviewers do not give credit for this component. The meetings must be structured so that an IPS specialist can ask for help when a person is having job problems, or a case manager can discuss a new referral in a timely manner, etc. Also, administrative meetings or meetings designed only to discuss people who are having crises are not adequate for the purpose of this component.

This item may still be rated 5 even if medication prescribers do not attend mental health treatment team meetings. Reviewers may recommend strategies for specialists to share information. For example, IPS specialists could attend a psychiatrist staffing, occasionally accompany a client to his appointment with a medication prescriber, or stop by psychiatrist's office to share information.

An IPS specialist should meet once a week with teams from which he has three or more people on his caseload. For those teams from which he has one or two people, he should attend meetings at least twice each month. The teams may be part of the mental health agency that is implementing IPS or if the agency is a clubhouse or community rehabilitation provider that does not provide mental health treatment the IPS specialists connect with practitioners at a separate agency.

Note: When communication between the IPS specialist and mental health practitioners is not documented (because the agency does not require documentation of communication in progress notes) reviewers find information from other sources. They ask mental health practitioners how often the IPS specialist attends their meetings, how they communicate between meetings, etc. Reviewers also ask IPS specialists to give examples of situations in which they worked collaboratively with mental health practitioners to help someone with work or school. They ask IPS specialists if they are able to communicate with mental health practitioners as often as needed.

Examples

An IPS program has two peer specialists who do not attend mental health treatment team meetings because agency leaders are concerned about client confidentiality. Reviewers recommend that IPS peers are included in the meetings in order to improve integration of services and also so that peers are treated equally to other IPS team members. The score is not affected.

IPS specialists report that they take turns attending mental health treatment team meetings and share information about each other's clients during the meetings. In this situation, credit would not be given for the first component because each IPS specialist does not attend his assigned team meetings on a weekly basis. The rationale is that the specialist who knows a person well is best suited to answer questions, ask for help, and brainstorm ideas related to the person's goals.

There are three mental health treatment teams at an agency. All teams have the same IPS specialist who attends the team meetings on a rotating basis (a different team each week). Reviewers do not give credit for this component because although the IPS specialist attends one meeting per week, he does not meet with *each* mental health treatment team on a weekly basis. The standard is that the specialist should meet once a week with any team from which he has three or more people on his caseload. For those teams from which he has fewer than three people, he should attend meetings at least twice a month.

An IPS specialist works with two mental health treatment teams. Both teams meet at 9:00 AM on Tuesday morning. The specialist attends the first half of Team A's meeting and the second half of Team B's meeting. Reviewers do not give credit for the first component because she does not participate in the entire meeting like other members of the team. They recommend changing the time of one of the meetings.

An IPS specialist meets weekly with residential workers at two supported housing programs where her clients live. Reviewers would not give credit for the first component because the specialist is not meeting with her client's primary mental health worker (e.g., case manager, counselor or therapist). However, if the residential workers function as primary service coordinators, reviewers *would* give credit for the first component.

IPS specialists are assigned to two mental health treatment teams. One team meets weekly and the specialists attend all of those meetings. The other team meets monthly. Reviewers do not give credit for the first component because the specialists do not attend meetings for each team weekly. They recommend weekly meetings for both teams.

Two IPS specialists from a clubhouse are each assigned to a different mental health treatment team at a nearby mental health center. They receive 90% or more of their referrals from these two teams. Both IPS specialists attend weekly treatment team meetings at the nearby agency. Reviewers give credit for this component.

COMPONENT 2: Employment specialist participates actively in treatment team meetings with shared decision-making.

An indication of good integration is when mental health team members help specialists think about strategies to support their clients' employment goals. For example, a counselor shared the following with the IPS specialist: "John left his last job because he felt unsure about his performance. It may help him to hear frequent feedback from his supervisor."

Observe whether the team generates ideas to suggest to clients or whether the IPS specialist simply reports on her caseload. Do mental health practitioners provide information that is relevant to individualized job searches or discuss what job supports may be helpful? Do they share information about a person's work or education history? Does the team generate solutions to help people with employment? For example, if a worker has problems with symptoms at work, has the specialist asked the case manager about coping strategies that might help the person? Does a counselor make suggestions for how a person could concentrate better on her studies? Does the employment specialist help the client to consider these suggestions through shared decision-making?

Examples

An IPS specialist reports on the progress of people she is serving during the mental health treatment team meeting, but the team does not engage in conversations about how to help people achieve their goals. Reviewers do not give credit for the second component.

Reviewers observe mental health practitioners and the IPS specialist develop possible strategies to help a worker improve his relationship with his supervisor. The IPS specialist reports how he and the client discussed the different strategies. This was an example of shared decision-making and reviewers give credit for the second component.

COMPONENT 3: Employment services documentation (i.e., vocational assessment/career profile, employment plan, progress notes) is integrated into client's mental health treatment record.

An integrated employment and mental health record is one way for mental health practitioners to stay informed about their clients' employment goals. While reading client records, reviewers look for employment documents including the career profile, job search/job support/educational plans, and employment progress notes.

In some IPS programs, specialists keep separate working files (e.g., the career profile, resume, etc.). This record keeping practice has a potential pitfall. Information is sometimes lost when there is staff turnover and employment documentation was not maintained in the client's agency record. Depending on agency policy, IPS specialists may also keep *copies* of employment documents in a working file.

Example

Vocational records are separate from mental health treatment records though there are plans to integrate records when electronic medical records are in place. Reviewers do not give credit for this component but comment that plans to integrate records will improve fidelity.

COMPONENT 4: Employment specialist's office is in close proximity to (or shared with) their mental health treatment team members.

Office location can affect how frequently practitioners communicate. When offices are in separate buildings, reviewers do not give credit for this component. Even when employment staff and mental health practitioners are located in the same building, they may be on different floors or wings of the building and have little contact with each other. Reviewers make recommendations for IPS specialists to have workspace in the same building *and near* their assigned mental health treatment teams.

The location of IPS peer specialist office space does not affect the score, though reviewers may recommend close proximity to the mental health treatment teams to improve integration of services.

Examples

Mental health practitioners' offices are grouped by team on the first and second floors of the mental health agency. The IPS specialists' offices are on the third floor of the building. Reviewers do not give credit for this component.

The IPS specialist is employed by a rehabilitation agency. He has an office at that agency and also has office space with his assigned mental health treatment team at the mental health agency. He spends the majority of his office time at the mental health agency location. Reviewers give credit for this component. Reviewers would give credit even if the specialist does not have his own individual office with his assigned team at the mental health agency as long as office space is available when he is there.

COMPONENT 5: Employment specialist helps the team think about employment for people who have not yet been referred to supported employment services.

This component is difficult to observe directly during a fidelity visit because it may not be an opportune time for an IPS specialist, or IPS peer specialist, to suggest work for a non-IPS client in a mental health treatment meeting. But fidelity reviewers can rate this item by asking mental health practitioners and their supervisor for examples of when the IPS specialist and/or peer have suggested work for unemployed people in the past.

Examples

About half of the mental health practitioners interviewed gave an example of when the IPS specialist or IPS peer suggested employment for someone who had not already been referred to the IPS program. Reviewers give credit for this component.

Directors from a clubhouse and a mental health agency, where most clubhouse members receive mental health treatment, developed a memorandum of understanding to allow clubhouse employment specialists to attend weekly treatment team meetings at the mental health agency. Reviewers observe the meetings during which employment specialists participate actively with shared-decision making, and suggest IPS for people who are unemployed. Mental health and employment records are not integrated. The employment specialists' primary office location is at the clubhouse. Reviewers score 3.

Sample questions for IPS specialists

Do you attend mental health treatment team meetings? How often?

Do you usually stay for the entire meeting?

Do you represent any of your fellow IPS specialists when you attend mental health team meetings?

What is the purpose of attending the meetings? Are the meetings helpful to you? Why or why not?

What are some examples of how mental health practitioners have helped people with education and employment goals?

How do you communicate with medication prescribers (psychiatrists, nurse practitioners)? Has that been effective?

Sample questions for IPS peer specialists

Do you attend mental health treatment team meetings? Which ones? How often? Do you stay for the entire meeting? (The score is not affected by peers attending or not attending mental health treatment team meetings but reviewers may recommend that they attend

weekly for better integration of services.

Do mental health practitioners share ideas for what may help a person with her career goals?

What is your role in the mental health treatment team meetings?

How do you help practitioners remember to talk about work with their clients? Do you ever suggest work for people who are unemployed? (If peers recommend work for people who are unemployed, reviewers give credit for that component.)

Sample questions for mental health supervisors or clinicians

What happens if an IPS specialist and case manager/service coordinator disagree about whether or not a person should quit a job, stop looking for jobs, etc.?

Can you remember a time when you (or another case manager/service coordinator) helped the IPS specialist think of a good job match or good job support?

Can you think of an example of a time when an IPS specialist or peer specialist suggested work for a person who had not yet been referred to the IPS program?

To calculate the score for this item:

Determine the total number of components present at the time of review. The total gives the item score.

3. Collaboration Between Employment Specialists and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors

The employment specialists and VR counselors have frequent contact for the purpose of discussing shared clients and identifying potential referrals.

Possible sources of information for this item include:

Interviews with state Vocational Rehabilitation counselors

Interviews with IPS specialists
Interview with IPS supervisor
Meeting minutes (if available)

Rationale: Both state Vocational Rehabilitation counselors and IPS practitioners are interested in achieving good employment outcomes. Clients benefit from the combined resources and expertise from both types of service providers.

State Vocational Rehabilitation is specific to the U.S. People in other countries should consider what other systems (e.g., unemployment office) impacts the career goals of their clients and how to better collaborate with staff workers in those programs.

Regularly scheduled meetings provide opportunities to celebrate successes and generate solutions to help people achieve their goals. State Vocational Rehabilitation counselors and IPS specialists each have knowledge and experience that is important to helping people with careers, and both should be involved in planning. Meetings are in person and clients may or may not be present. When clients are not present, the counselor and specialist generate possible solutions to share with the person later. The client ultimately decides which strategies to try.

There are different ways to collaborate. Some IPS supervisors invite state Vocational Rehabilitation counselors to the vocational unit meeting and others create monthly meetings to talk about people who are on both caseloads. In some areas, Vocational Rehabilitation counselors attend mental health treatment team meetings once a month so they can speak with everyone who is helping their clients with school and work.

Examples

A designated state Vocational Rehabilitation counselor attends the vocational unit meetings once or twice each month. The counselor receives all, or most, of the referrals from the IPS program. The score is 5.

IPS specialists go to the state Vocational Rehabilitation office once each month to meet with the counselors as a group and discuss client situations. The score is 5.

A designated Vocational Rehabilitation counselor receives most of the IPS referrals and attends the mental health treatment team meeting each month. During the meeting, he is able to talk with the mental health counselor, the peer specialist, and IPS specialist working with each person. The score is 5.

The state Vocational Rehabilitation counselor and IPS specialist meet with each person served each month. The score is 5. Reviewers may comment that this process is very time intensive if most IPS clients are open with Vocational Rehabilitation and suggest another strategy that would allow the IPS specialist to focus on helping people directly with employment.

Sample questions for the IPS team

Do you participate in meetings with Vocational Rehabilitation counselors?

How do the Vocational Rehabilitation counselors help people on the IPS team?

How does everyone work together with clients to develop the employment plan?

Sample questions for state Vocational Rehabilitation counselors

How often do you meet with the IPS specialists? In what context?

How does everyone work together with clients to develop the employment plan?

How can collaboration be improved?

To calculate the score for this item:

Determine the frequency of communication between the IPS specialists and Vocational Rehabilitation counselors. Score using the 1-5 anchors as appropriate.

4. Vocational Unit

At least two full-time employment specialists and a team leader comprise the employment unit. They have weekly client-based group supervision following the supported employment model in which strategies are identified and job leads are shared. They provide coverage for each other's caseload when needed.

Possible sources of information for this item include:

- Observation of the vocational unit meeting
- Interviews with IPS specialists
- Interviews with IPS peers
- Interview with the IPS supervisor

Rationale: A unit of people performing the same work is able to share ideas and information and provide back up for each other. In contrast, a single IPS specialist on a

team of mental health practitioners has no one to help him learn skills such as building employer relationships.

The job titles of supervisor, IPS team leader, IPS coordinator, and IPS program leader are used interchangeably and indicate the same position.

When there is good fidelity to this item, the IPS supervisor meets weekly with all the IPS specialists as a group to review client employment goals and progress towards achieving those goals. Specialists share ideas to help people meet their goals. Team members also share job leads during the meeting and occasionally introduce each other to employers. IPS specialists have discrete caseloads but provide back up and support for other IPS specialists as needed.

View the “SE Unit Meeting” module on the Supported Employment Fidelity DVD and consider the reviewers’ impressions.

Examples

A mental health agency in a rural area serves several counties. An IPS specialist is located in each county and the same person supervises all of the specialists. Reviewers suggest weekly IPS team meetings either by phone or in person. When this arrangement exists, consider the group to be a single employment unit. If mental health practitioners cover for an IPS specialist when she is unavailable (for example, helping someone with a job application when the specialist is away from work), the score for item **Vocational Unit** is 4.

IPS specialists meet weekly but the focus of the meeting is to discuss administrative issues or to quickly provide an update on each person they serve. The score is not higher than 3 because the purpose of the meeting is for team members to support each other by generating possible solutions, sharing job leads and celebrating successes.

The IPS team leader is not knowledgeable about IPS principles and practices, for example, he explains that people with active substance abuse problems are ineligible for IPS and he suggests that IPS specialists close cases after people have been employed for 90 days. Reviewers do not score above 3 because supervision is not based on the evidence-based practice.

A small agency in a rural area has just one IPS specialist position and the supervisor does not carry a caseload. The score is 1. Reviewers explain that it is difficult for an IPS specialist to work without another IPS specialist to help problem-solve, share job leads and responsibilities. Unless the agency serves fewer than 60 people with serious mental illness, reviewers encourage the agency to add another specialist position.

An IPS unit consists of one IPS specialist and one full-time IPS supervisor. The supervisor carries a caseload of 12 people. Because the supervisor functions as both a supervisor and IPS specialist, he is able to share job leads and provide coverage as needed for the other position. The score is 3.

A vocational unit consists of one IPS specialist and one IPS supervisor who does not carry an employment caseload – her other responsibility is supervising a mental health treatment team. The score is 1.

Two IPS specialists on an assertive community treatment team (ACT) have office space with the ACT team and attend ACT team meetings two days each week. The two IPS specialists also attend the weekly IPS vocational unit meeting to discuss client situations, share job leads, and they help out other IPS specialists as needed. The IPS specialists receive field mentoring for job development from the IPS supervisor. The ACT supervisor and IPS supervisor meet together with the specialists to provide monthly individual supervision. The score is 5.

Sample questions for IPS specialists

To whom do you report?

Can you share an example of a time that you helped another specialist or that someone helped you?

How often do you meet with the other IPS specialists? What do you do during these meetings? How are the meetings helpful?

Please give an example of the last time that you shared a job lead with someone else on the team.

Was the meeting that we observed today a typical meeting?

Sample questions for IPS peer specialists

Was the meeting that we observed today a typical meeting?

Do you provide coverage when an IPS specialist is away or has a scheduling conflict? (This may improve the score, for example, if there is only one IPS specialist but the peer specialist is able to provide back up.)

Are the meetings strengths-based? Why or why not? (This information may also pertain to items **Individualized Job Search**, **Individualized Follow-along Supports**, **Zero Exclusion Criteria**, or **Ongoing, Work-based Vocational Assessment**.)

Sample questions for IPS supervisors

How do IPS specialists work together?

How often do you schedule team meetings?

What is a typical agenda for a team meeting?

To calculate the score for this item:

Determine the number of staff on the vocational unit, frequency of client-based group supervision, and whether coverage for each other's caseloads is available when needed.
Score using the 1-5 anchors as appropriate.

5. Role of Employment Supervisor

Supported employment unit is led by a supported employment team leader. Employment specialists' skills are developed and improved through outcome-based supervision. All five key roles of the employment supervisor are present.

Components of this item:

- One full-time (FTE) supervisor is responsible for no more than 10 employment specialists. The supervisor does not have other supervisory responsibilities. (Program leaders supervising fewer than ten employment specialists may spend a percentage of time on other supervisory activities on a prorated basis. For example, an employment supervisor responsible for 4 employment specialists may be devoted to IPS supervision half time).
- Supervisor conducts weekly supervision designed to review client situations and identify new strategies and ideas to help clients with their work lives.
- Supervisor communicates with mental health team leaders to ensure that services are integrated, to problem-solve programmatic issues, (such as referral issues or transfer of follow-along to mental health workers), and to be a champion for the value of work. Supervisor attends a meeting for each mental health treatment team on a quarterly basis.
- Supervisor accompanies employment specialists, who are new or having difficulty with job development, in the field monthly to improve skills by observing, modeling, and giving feedback on skills, e.g., meeting employers for job development.
- Supervisor reviews current client outcomes with employment specialists and sets goals to improve program performance at least quarterly.

Possible sources of information for this item include:

Interview with the IPS supervisor
Review of field mentoring notes (if available)
Interviews with IPS specialists
Interview with IPS peers

Interviews with mental health practitioners and mental health treatment team supervisors

Rationale: Effective supervisors are key to successful programs. IPS supervisors fulfill a number of functions, including trainer for IPS specialists, liaison to state Vocational Rehabilitation, promoter of employment in the agency, quality improvement manager for the IPS program (outcomes-based supervision), organizer of the steering committee, and co-leader for program implementation and sustainability.

Because this item singles out one person at the agency, it is especially important for reviewers to highlight some of the supervisor's strengths in the report. A score of 3 or lower is not necessarily a reflection of the supervisor's skill level but might be an indicator of other issues such as having too many additional responsibilities which is likely to impact a number of key components.

Reviewers may suggest supervision tools such as field mentoring logs and data collection forms. Samples can be found near the end of this manual in Sample Program Forms.

COMPONENT 1: One full-time (FTE) supervisor is responsible for no more than 10 employment specialists. The supervisor does not have other supervisory responsibilities. (Program leaders supervising fewer than ten employment specialists may spend a percentage of time on other supervisory activities on a prorated basis. For example, an employment supervisor responsible for 4 employment specialists may be devoted to IPS supervision half time.)

The intent of this component is to ensure that the supervisor has the time to do his job well. Good supervision of IPS programs is critical for good employment outcomes.

It is helpful for supervisors to carry a small caseload if they have not had experience as an IPS specialist. Caseload size should depend on the number of people supervised. If the supervisor is responsible for 10 IPS specialists, she may only have one person on her caseload. If supervising one specialist, a caseload of 15 people may be manageable. If a supervisor has a caseload that is large, in relation to her many other responsibilities, reviewers do not give credit for this component and recommend that the supervisor reduce her caseload.

If the supervisor does not carry a caseload, reviewers may recommend that the supervisor provide services to a small number of people in order to stay current with implementation challenges. However, they give credit for this component even if the supervisor does not have a caseload.

Examples

A supervisor is responsible for 12 IPS specialists. Reviewers do not give credit for this component.

A supervisor is responsible for an IPS program with eight IPS specialists and is also responsible for clinical supervision of an ACT team. She supervises five case managers on the ACT team, leads daily ACT team meetings, and tracks outcomes for the ACT team. Reviewers do not give credit for this component because it is very difficult for supervisors to help two programs develop while training new staff, tracking outcomes, coordinating services with state Vocational Rehabilitation, implementing fidelity plans, etc. The supervisor plays a key role and agency leaders should ensure that she has the capacity to do her job well.

An IPS supervisor is responsible for one IPS specialist and a team of five case managers. Reviewers give credit for this component.

COMPONENT 2: Supervisor conducts weekly supervision designed to review client situations and identify new strategies and ideas to help clients with their work lives.

The supervisor must provide weekly supervision in order to receive credit for this component. Either individual or group supervision (vocational unit meetings) is sufficient for this component. However, reviewers may recommend that supervisors provide individual supervision in addition to group supervision. New IPS specialists often benefit from weekly individual supervision while experienced IPS specialists often appreciate the support of individual supervision at least once or twice monthly. If a specialist has low employment outcomes, reviewers may recommend weekly individual supervision (office-based and mentoring in the community) regardless of the person's tenure on the job.

Examples

A supervisor meets weekly with individual IPS specialists to review client situations, but the IPS team does not meet as a group. Reviewers give credit for this component but the score for item **Vocational Unit** is lowered because there are no team meetings.

An IPS supervisor does not schedule weekly unit meetings or individual supervision, but has daily contact with team members and discusses client situations as they occur. Reviewers do not give credit for this component because impromptu conversations do not replace focused planning and sharing ideas. Further, without meetings, discussions tend to focus on problems and ignore what is going well and who would benefit from further career development.

COMPONENT 3: Supervisor communicates with mental health team leaders to ensure that services are integrated, to problem-solve programmatic issues, (such as referral issues or transfer of follow-along to mental health workers), and to be a champion for the value of work. Attends a meeting for each mental health treatment team on a quarterly basis.

The purpose of IPS supervisors attending mental health treatment team meetings is to model using a team approach. For example, if the IPS specialist announces that someone will soon start work, the supervisor asks team members for ideas about job supports.

Example

A supervisor attends one mental health treatment team meeting each quarter. The specialists on her team work with four mental health treatment teams. Reviewers do not give credit for this component because she is not attending each team meeting each quarter.

COMPONENT 4: Supervisor accompanies employment specialists who are new or having difficulty with job development in the field monthly to improve skills by observing, modeling, and giving feedback on skills, e.g., meeting employers for job development.

In order to receive credit for this component, all new IPS specialists receive field mentoring (supervision and coaching) while meeting with employers to learn about their businesses or advocate for job seekers. Field mentoring continues until the specialists are skilled at building relationships with employers.

To get credit for this component, the supervisor must do the field mentoring herself and not delegate to another staff person. For example, supervisors may ask experienced team members to model employer relationship building, but supervisors *also* model the skill and coach IPS specialists directly.

Field mentoring helps IPS specialists develop skills in a variety of areas. For example, reviewers might comment under item **Assertive Engagement and Outreach** that field mentoring would help IPS specialists who have difficulty engaging new clients. However, the item **Role of the Employment Supervisor** focuses only on field mentoring for employer relationship building because that is a skill that is difficult for many IPS specialists to learn and is related to good employment outcomes.

To receive credit for this component, supervisors provide monthly field mentoring with anyone who is new or is having difficulty with job development. For example, if fewer than 40% of the people on a specialist's caseload are employed or if a specialist has fewer than three job starts each quarter, the IPS supervisor provides monthly field mentoring.

Examples

A supervisor provides monthly field mentoring for job development to all new team members. When specialists have at least three job starts per quarter and maintain at least 45% employment on their caseloads, she provides field mentoring quarterly. She does not document field mentoring. Reviewers give credit for this component and suggest that she maintains field mentoring logs. Sample logs are available in the Sample Program Forms section of this manual.

A supervisor reports that she accompanies new staff to meet with employers monthly for the first three months. Reviewers observe job development and realize that staff is not skilled at building employer relationships. They do not give credit for this component and recommend monthly field mentoring.

A supervisor says that he does not provide field mentoring for employer relationship building because he does not have experience in this area himself. Reviewers do not give credit for this component. They comment that he will gain experience by going out with his staff and will be able to provide more effective supervision by knowing how to build employer relationships.

COMPONENT 5: Supervisor reviews current client outcomes with employment specialists and sets goals to improve program performance at least quarterly.

For this item, the supervisor reviews client outcomes (e.g., job starts, number and percent of people working, number/percent of people in education programs, etc.) with the team *and/or* individual IPS specialists each quarter. The supervisor also helps set goals for improvement. For example, if a specialist has helped two people start jobs each quarter, her goal may be to help three people start jobs each quarter. Or if a team had 34% employment, the goal may be to increase to 40% employment over six months.

Examples

An IPS supervisor reviews client outcomes with the team, looks for trends, and sets goals for improved services. He reports that he tracks the number of referrals to the program, the number of people who obtain competitive jobs, the number/percent of people who retain jobs for 90 days, and the number of working people who transition off the IPS caseload. He also tracks the number of people who receive educational supports. He says, “We noticed that the number of people who kept jobs for at least 90 days had been decreasing over the past few quarters. We talked about that as a team. I asked everyone to discuss job supports in the weekly team meeting and I reviewed written job support plans. Our team goal is for 70% of people who start jobs to stay employed for at least 90 days.” Reviewers give credit for this component.

A supervisor tracks employment outcomes and shares data with the team, but does not set goals for improvement. Reviewers do not give credit for this component. They suggest that the supervisor helps the team and individual specialists set goals. They give examples of goals, such as: “Increase job starts to at least three per quarter by January,” and “Engage at least 80% of people referred to the IPS program.”

Sample questions for IPS specialists

Do you meet with your supervisor for individual supervision (or for group supervision)? How often? What happens during those meetings?

How did you learn how to build relationships with employers? Did your supervisor ever go with you to meet employers? When was the last time?

Do you receive information about the outcomes for the IPS program? How do you receive that information? Does your team have goals to improve outcomes? What are the goals and how will you achieve them?

Does your supervisor ever help you set performance goals for yourself? What is an example?

Sample questions for IPS peer specialists

Do you receive information about outcomes for the IPS program? How do you receive that information? Does the program have goals to improve any outcomes?

What goals have you and your supervisor set for your own performance? (If the peer specialist does not have goals for performance improvement, reviewers may still give credit for that component, but they may also recommend that the supervisor helps the peer set and achieve goals, just like his team members.)

Sample questions for case managers/service coordinators/counselors

Does the IPS supervisor ever come to your mental health team meeting? How is that helpful? When was the last time?

Sample questions for the IPS supervisor

What are your responsibilities at the agency? What positions do you supervise? Are you on agency committees? Do you have any other jobs at the agency? Do you carry a caseload? Is it an employment caseload?

How do you use your program outcome data? Are you currently trying to improve any specific outcome? Can you tell me how you are working on that? Do individual IPS specialists have goals for improvement and can you share some examples?

How do new IPS specialists learn about job development? (If the IPS team leader says that she models meeting with employers, ask what happens when they go out together. Also ask if she is using field mentoring logs.) What do you do when a specialist has a low number of job starts?

How do you provide supervision? How often? If it varies by specialist, how does the supervisor decide how much supervision to provide to each specialist?

How do you coordinate IPS with mental health treatment or housing programs? What is your relationship with the other supervisors at the agency? How do you get feedback about the IPS program from other supervisors and staff? How do you hear about changes in services at the agency?

To calculate the score for this item:

Determine the total number of components present at the time of review. Score using the 1-5 anchors as appropriate.

6. Zero Exclusion Criteria

All clients interested in working have access to supported employment services regardless of job readiness factors, substance abuse, symptoms, history of violent behavior, cognitive impairments, treatment non-adherence, and personal presentation. These apply during supported employment services too. Employment specialists offer to help with another job when one has ended, regardless of the reason that the job ended or number of jobs held. If VR has screening criteria, the mental health agency does not use them to exclude anybody. Clients are not screened out formally or informally.

Possible sources of information for this item include:

- Interviews with mental health practitioners
- Interviews with IPS specialists
- Interviews with IPS peer specialists
- Viewing public areas (look for instructions for clients to self-refer to IPS)
- Interview with medical prescriber

Client record reviews (reviewers read progress notes to learn when a person expressed interest in work and when was he referred to IPS)

Interviews with clients

Interviews with family members

Rationale: Practitioners cannot accurately predict whether someone will be successful at work, but interest in work has been demonstrated to be a predictor of success. People who want to work overcome many types of barriers and IPS specialists help by assisting people in finding jobs that are good matches for each person's skills, experiences, preferences, and needs. An important foundation of IPS is that any person who wants to work should have access to IPS services.

Many practitioners and administrators report that IPS is available to any person who expresses an interest in work, however, people may be screened out on a case-by-case basis. For example, a case manager/service coordinator may neglect to ask someone about his interest in work or suggest that someone focus on sobriety before pursuing employment. There may be times when people are encouraged to postpone work to focus on treatment, which is *not* consistent with zero exclusion criteria. Instead, referrals for IPS are solicited by many sources within the agency, i.e., case managers/service coordinators, therapists, housing staff, peer specialists, clients (self-referral), and psychiatrists.

IPS specialists help people with more than one job, as needed. When state Vocational Rehabilitation counselors are unable to authorize more than one job placement, IPS specialists still offer to help with another job right away and they give hopeful messages that what was learned from the last job will contribute to success in the next position.

Reviewers determine whether every person has access to IPS. When program revenue comes from state Vocational Rehabilitation, reviewers ask if Vocational Rehabilitation counselors are able to serve people with active substance use disorders, people who have recently lost jobs, or people who were recently closed from Vocational Rehabilitation services. They ask what other funds are available to cover services for people who do not have open cases with Vocational Rehabilitation.

When the IPS program is not part of the mental health agency, reviewers meet with mental health practitioners (or other primary staff members) to understand how the practitioners discuss work with people. Reviewers go to the mental health agency to conduct these interviews.

If there is a waiting list for the IPS program, reviewers do not score higher than 4. The rationale is that when there are waiting lists, some mental health practitioners will stop making referrals and some clients will lose interest in employment. Reviewers recommend that agency leaders increase program capacity.

Reviewers read progress notes by mental health practitioners (including medication prescribers) to determine whether mental health team members talk to people about

employment and careers. This single source of information does not determine the score for this item.

Examples

A mental health agency serves 1,200 people with serious mental illness each year but the IPS program only serves 40 people. It is doubtful that all clients are encouraged to consider employment. If they were, reviewers would surely hear about a long waiting list. Reviewers recommend adding IPS specialist positions and comment on the accessibility to IPS. Reviewers may score 2 depending on other evidence.

A transitional employment program and an agency-run business (that employs clients) operate alongside of the IPS supported employment program. Reviewers hear that mental health practitioners refer people to the prevocational programs to gain work experience and develop good work behaviors. Practitioners explain that client choice determines the vocational program selected, however, reviewers know that people often feel encouragement from providers to move in one direction or another, even when “choice” is offered. Some people have become so accustomed to institutionalized choices that they require encouragement to opt for competitive jobs. Reviewers ask people who have used the prevocational programs if they would have preferred to move directly into competitive jobs. They also ask clients how they decided which program to select. Reviewers do not score higher than 3.

Mental health practitioners require abstinence before referring people to IPS. Reviewers do not score higher than 3.

IPS specialists discourage mental health practitioners from referring people who have legal histories. Reviewers do not score higher than 3.

When programs do not have mechanisms for clients to refer themselves to IPS, or clients and their family members do not know that they can self-refer, the score is not higher than 4. Reviewers ask clients and practitioners how people would know that they can self-refer and also how they learn the steps to self-refer.

When IPS specialists close cases for people whose jobs did not end well (for example, if a person was fired for poor attendance). The score is not higher than 3.

Sample questions for IPS specialists

Who should be referred to IPS? Who should not be referred to IPS? How about people with substance abuse problems? People with histories of violence? Someone who misses appointments with his counselor?

If someone leaves a job without notice because he does not like the job, what do you do?

If someone lost a job because of symptoms, would you help that person find another job? What next steps would you recommend?

Can you serve people who are not open with state Vocational Rehabilitation? (If the answer is no, “Are there any people whom Vocational Rehabilitation counselors cannot serve?”)

Do some case managers or therapists refer people more frequently than others? Does your caseload list include the name of the practitioner who referred each person to you?

Sample questions for IPS peer specialists

Are there any restrictions for who can be referred to the IPS program?

Who can refer a person to IPS? Can people refer themselves? Does any person who receives treatment for serious mental illness know how to refer himself?

Who should be referred to IPS? Who should not be referred to IPS?

What could be done to improve adherence to zero exclusion criteria at this agency?

Sample questions for case managers/service coordinators, therapists, and medication prescribers

When is the right time to talk to someone about work?

When would you *not* recommend a competitive job to someone?

Are there times when a person needs to develop prevocational skills before engaging with the IPS program? Are there programs that help people develop those skills? How often have you referred to those programs in the past six months?

Do you ever worry that a job could worsen a person’s substance abuse problem by providing more income? How do you approach this issue?

What do you do if you are working with a person who has poor hygiene but says that he wants a job?

What is your strategy for working with someone who says he is interested in a job but does not take medicine on a regular basis?

Do you ever suggest work for people who are in their fifties, sixties, or older?

What leads you to have discussions about employment with people?

Have you ever worked with someone who was homeless but wanted to get a job?

Has there ever been a time when you suggested that someone stop focusing on employment so that he or she could work on treatment issues? Please describe.

How many people on your caseload are in the IPS program?

If the program has a waiting list: Have you continued to make referrals?

Who on your caseload is interested in work? Have you referred those people?

Sample questions for IPS supervisors

How are clients referred to the IPS program? How long does it take?

Can anyone make a referral to the program?

How would any person served by the agency know that he could refer himself to IPS?

Who should be referred to IPS? Who should not be referred to IPS?

Have you received any inappropriate referrals over the past few months? If so, please describe.

Sample questions for supervisors of mental health practitioners

See questions for case managers/service coordinators, therapists, and medication prescribers.

Do you know how many people are working on each practitioner's caseload?

How do you supervise mental health practitioners who do not have many clients who work?

Sample questions for clients

Do you remember when someone at this agency asked if you were interested in employment? Was that the right time? Would you have been interested in hearing about work at an earlier time?

How did you learn about the IPS program?

Did you go to a different employment program before meeting with (name of employment specialist)? How did you learn about that program? How did you decide to start that program?

Has anyone ever suggested that you should hold off on work?

Sample questions for agency administrators

Is the IPS program able to serve most of the people who want to work at your agency?

To calculate the score for this item:

Determine what level of exclusion (if any) the agency has. Score using the 1-5 anchors as appropriate.

7. Agency Focus on Competitive Employment

Agency promotes competitive work through multiple strategies. Agency intake includes questions about interest in employment. Agency displays written postings (e.g. brochures, bulletin boards, posters) about employment and supported employment services. The focus should be with the agency programs that provide services to adults with severe mental illness. Agency supports ways for clients to share work stories with other clients and staff. Agency measures rate of competitive employment and shares this information with agency leadership and staff.

Components of this item:

- Agency intake includes questions about interest in employment.
- Agency includes questions about interest in employment on all annual (or semi-annual) assessment or treatment plan reviews.
- Agency displays written postings (e.g., brochures, bulletin boards, posters) about working and supported employment services, in lobby and other waiting areas.
- Agency supports ways for clients to share work stories with other clients and staff (e.g., agency-wide employment recognition events, in-service training, peer support groups, agency newsletter articles, invited speakers at client treatment groups, etc.) at least twice a year.
- Agency measures rates of competitive employment on at least a quarterly basis and shares outcomes with agency leadership and staff.

Possible sources of information for this item include:

Tour of the agency
Interviews with clients
Interviews with mental health practitioners
Interviews with peer specialists
Interviews with IPS specialists
Client record reviews
Interview with agency leaders
Review of data: quarterly employment rates for all people with serious mental illness

Rationale: Zero Exclusion Criteria measures whether people who are interested in work have access to IPS supported employment. **Agency Focus on Competitive Employment** provides opportunities for people to consider whether they want to work. Some people who have not worked, maybe for years, need encouragement to think about how a job would fit into their lives. Others need hope that they could be successful in a job that they would enjoy.

When agencies have multiple mental health treatment teams, the rating is made for the office/team to which the IPS specialists are connected. Reviewers do not apply the components to mental health teams that do not have an assigned IPS specialist.

When the IPS program is not situated within the mental health agency but is part of a separate rehabilitation agency or community rehabilitation provider, reviewers apply the components of this item to the mental health agency (see Chapter 5). Reviewers visit the mental health agency to read mental health intakes (or other standardized form that is used at intake) and treatment plans (or other standardized form that is used at least annually). Reviewers view public areas of the building for displays that encourage people to consider employment or information about the IPS program.

COMPONENT 1: Agency intake includes questions about interest in employment. Agency includes questions about interest in employment on all annual (or semi-annual) assessment or treatment plan reviews.

Reviewers read client records (intake and annual forms) to determine whether people are asked standardized questions about interest in employment when they start services and at least annually thereafter. The reason that the questions should be standardized (written on the forms) is so that practitioners do not unintentionally ask about employment in a dismissive manner such as, “You don’t want to work, do you?”

Questions about a person’s work history are insufficient. Mental health practitioners discuss whether the person would like to pursue a job or career *now or in the future*.

Examples of questions about interest in work

If you are working now, are you satisfied with the job?

Are you interested in working?

Have you considered school or technical training?

Would you like to learn how your disability benefits would be affected by a job?

Would you like to hear why some people choose employment rather than disability benefits?

Would you like to learn about services that help people with jobs and careers?

Have you considered going to work?

What would be the advantages of having a job?

What concerns do you have about working a job?

COMPONENT 2: Agency displays written postings (e.g., brochures, bulletin boards, posters) about working and supported employment services, in lobby and other waiting areas.

At least one public area of the building should include material about employment so that clients and family members know that help is available for jobs and careers.

Examples

Posters and brochures about IPS are located in and near IPS offices. Information about employment is not in other areas of the building. Reviewers do not give credit because the purpose of this component is to advertise job assistance to people who are not involved in IPS already.

Reviewers see a bulletin board with examples of jobs that have been found by people in the IPS program. The board is in the lobby and includes the IPS supervisor's phone number so that people can refer themselves to IPS. Reviewers give credit for this component.

IPS services are only offered to clients who receive long-term mental health services and not to those who come to the agency for short-term counseling. Promotional materials about IPS are only in the areas of the building where long-term services are provided. Reviewers give credit for this component.

COMPONENT 3: Agency supports ways for clients to share work stories with other clients and staff (e.g., agency-wide employment recognition events, in-service training, peer support groups, agency newsletter articles, invited speakers at client treatment groups, etc.) at least twice a year.

Hearing from working peers helps many people feel hopeful about working a job. Practitioners also benefit from hearing how employment makes a difference in people's lives. Staff members create opportunities for working people to share their stories with unemployed clients *and* practitioners at least twice each year.

Examples

The IPS team has an Employment Celebration Breakfast twice a year. All clients of the agency are invited to attend and hear presentations from working people. Mental health practitioners do not attend. Reviewers do not give credit for this component because mental health practitioners should also hear the stories. They recommend that mental health practitioners attend the breakfast and bring their clients who may be interested in jobs.

Administrators report that they do not create special opportunities for people to share their experiences about work and school because, “Most clients get to know each other over time in groups and in the waiting room. They talk about their jobs with each other.” Reviewers do not give credit for this component because administrators cannot know that many people get to hear about work.

Reviewers read written work stories from agency clients, which have been placed in waiting rooms. Mental health practitioners report that working people come to their team meeting each quarter to talk about their jobs and why they chose to work. Reviewers give credit for this component.

COMPONENT 4: Agency measures rates of competitive employment on at least a quarterly basis and shares outcomes with agency leadership and staff.

This component refers to all persons with serious mental illness served by the agency, not just those people who receive IPS services. The purpose is to raise awareness about how many people are unemployed. For credit to be given, agency leaders must have shared at least one quarter of employment data with agency administrators and staff.

Reviewers ask agency leaders if they monitor the number/percent of people with serious mental illness who are competitively employed on a quarterly basis. They also ask practitioners what percent of people with serious mental illness are employed. If practitioners do not receive information about the number/percent of people who are employed, collecting the data has not raised awareness and credit is not given. (If practitioners cannot remember the exact numbers, reviewers still give credit as long as practitioners remember having received the information.)

When reviewers learn that different types of employment (e.g., volunteer, sheltered, transitional employment, competitive) are not separated in the data collected or reported, they include the definition for competitive employment (see Glossary) in their comments.

Example

An example of good fidelity is when supervisors distribute caseload lists to case managers/service coordinators at the beginning of the month and ask them to circle the name of each person who had a competitive job during the previous month. Mental health practitioners are given the definition for competitive work each time. Leaders send a memo with the results, “Fifteen percent of people with serious mental illness that we serve are employed. That is up 2% from last quarter! Our goal is 18% by next year.” The quality assurance director visits mental health treatment team meetings to discuss the outcome.

Sample questions for case managers/service coordinators, therapists, counselors

How do you define competitive employment?

How many people with serious mental illness served by this agency have competitive jobs?

Have working people had opportunities to share their stories (newsletters, speaking at events or treatment groups, etc.)?

When you are working on the annual assessment (or treatment plan) what do you do if someone says he wants to work? What do you do if he says he isn't sure he wants to work?

What is the current rate of competitive employment for persons with serious mental illness at your agency?

Sample questions for agency administrators

When you measure the rate of competitive employment for clients, which people are included?

How do you define competitive employment?

How is information about competitive employment collected? How often?

How is information about the rate of competitive employment shared with staff?

Since the last fidelity review, have there been opportunities for people to share their back-to-work stories with other clients and staff? Please describe.

Do you collect information about other types of employment (e.g., sheltered jobs, jobs set aside for people with disabilities)? Are those types of jobs separated from competitive employment?

How many people with serious mental illness have competitive jobs? Are there goals to increase this number?

Sample question for IPS peer specialists

What can be done to raise awareness about the importance of employment among practitioners? (The purpose of asking is that peers may have good suggestions to share in the report. Reviewers do not ask in order to alter the final score.)

How do clients learn about IPS services? What would be better strategies to advertise IPS?

To calculate the score for this item:

Determine the total number of components present at the time of review. Score using the 1-5 anchors as appropriate.

8. Executive Team Support for SE

Agency executive team members (e.g., CEO/Executive Director, Chief Operating Officer, QA Director, Chief Financial Officer, Clinical Director, Medical Director, Human Resource Director) assist with supported employment implementation and sustainability. All five key components of executive team support are present.

Components of this item:

- Executive Director and Clinical Director demonstrate knowledge regarding the principles of supported employment.
- Agency QA process includes an explicit review of the SE program, or components of the program, at least every 6 months through the use of the Supported Employment Fidelity Scale or until achieving high fidelity, and at least yearly thereafter. Agency QA process uses the results of the fidelity assessment to improve SE implementation and sustainability.
- At least one member of the executive team actively participates at SE leadership team meetings (steering committee meetings) that occur at least every six months for high fidelity programs and at least quarterly for programs that have not yet achieved high fidelity. “Steering committee” is defined as a diverse group of stakeholders charged with reviewing fidelity, program implementation, and the service delivery system. The committee develops written action plans aimed at developing or sustaining high fidelity services.
- The agency CEO/Executive Director communicates how SE services support the mission of the agency and articulates clear and specific goals for SE and/or competitive employment to all agency staff during the first six months and at least annually (i.e., SE kickoff, all-agency meetings, agency newsletters, etc.) This item is not delegated to another administrator.
- SE program leader shares information about EBP barriers and facilitators with the executive team (including the CEO) at least twice each year. The executive team helps the program leader identify and implement solutions to barriers.

Possible sources of information for this item include:

Interviews with the executive team members (e.g., executive director, clinical director and quality assurance director)

Interview with the IPS supervisor

Review of quality assurance reports or meeting minutes

Interviews with mental health practitioners

Interviews with IPS specialists

Interviews with IPS peer specialists

Review of steering committee meetings

Review of fidelity action plan/strategic plan

Note: Job titles may vary by organization and by system. For example, in the Veterans Administration, job titles of the executive team include hospital director, associate director, chief of staff, and department head (e.g., Chief of Mental Health, Behavioral Health Service Line Chief, etc.). In some agencies the executive director is called the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). In addition, job titles of the executive team members in agencies that serve other populations or agencies in other countries may vary.

Rationale: The purpose of this item is to ensure that IPS implementation and sustainability is not delegated to the IPS team. Implementation research studies have demonstrated that agency leadership is critical for successful implementation of an evidence-based practice.

Reviewers conduct a short group interview with several administrators, for example, the executive director/chief executive officer (CEO), quality assurance director and clinical director. This group reports on activities completed by the entire executive team. It is unnecessary for reviewers to meet with each member of the executive team.

Large agencies may have more than one IPS team (an IPS team consists of one or more IPS specialists reporting to a single supervisor). In those cases, IPS fidelity visits are conducted for individual teams, but it is only necessary to interview the agency's executive team annually. Information from the executive team interview can be used for each IPS team fidelity review during the year.

When the IPS supported employment program is not part of the mental health agency, some components of this item refer to both the agency where the IPS program is located and the mental health agency, while other components refer only to the agency where the IPS supported employment program is located. Please see the list below.

- **First component:** Executive directors for both agencies should demonstrate basic understanding of IPS supported employment in order for reviewers to give credit for this component.
- **Second component:** Reviewers learn about the quality assurance process at both agencies.
- **Third component:** At least one administrator from each agency participates in the leadership meetings (sometimes called steering committee meetings) to receive credit for this component.
- **Fourth component:** Both directors express their support for competitive employment and IPS supported employment to receive credit.
- **Fifth component:** This component applies to the agency that employs the IPS staff.

View the module “Executive Director Interview” on the Supported Employment Fidelity DVD. The fidelity reviewers obtain specific information about how the executive team promotes IPS supported employment.

COMPONENT 1: Executive Director and Clinical Director demonstrate knowledge regarding the principles of supported employment.

To meet this criterion, senior management should have a general understanding of the IPS model to the extent that they understand the overall philosophy and key resources and practices necessary for an IPS program to function. Senior management are not expected to know the operational details of IPS.

Most high-level managers have difficulty describing all eight IPS practice principles. When they can describe a few principles, reviewers give credit for this component. The rationale for this component is that IPS programs have greater sustainability when upper managers understand how IPS is different from other employment programs. For example, if they understand that people who want to work should be helped directly with a competitive job, they are more likely to help phase out prevocational programs at the agency.

Example

An executive director highlights a few principles while describing the program. She says, “The program helps people with regular jobs right away, and the program is available to anyone who wants to work. I am excited that we are implementing another evidence-based practice in our agency.” Reviewers give credit for this component.

COMPONENT 2: Agency QA process includes an explicit review of the SE program, or components of the program, at least every 6 months through the use of the Supported Employment Fidelity Scale or until achieving high fidelity, and at least yearly thereafter. Agency QA process uses the results of the fidelity assessment to improve SE implementation and sustainability.

The purpose of this component is to encourage agency leaders to help monitor and improve IPS fidelity scores. Reviewers give credit if the quality assurance process monitors a few fidelity items or the total score.

Examples

Reviewers read agency quality assurance reports and learn that the quality assurance committee has been monitoring the overall IPS fidelity score, and the score for item **Zero Exclusion Criteria**, for the past 18 months. The reports reference how the IPS steering committee helped improve fidelity. Reviewers give credit for this component.

The quality assurance director reports that the committee has discussed goals to monitor and improve IPS fidelity measures, but fidelity has not been reported in the quality assurance process yet. Reviewers do not give credit for this component.

COMPONENT 3: At least one member of the executive team actively participates at SE leadership team meetings (steering committee meetings) that occur at least every

six months for high fidelity programs and at least quarterly for programs that have not yet achieved high fidelity. “Steering committee” is defined as a diverse group of stakeholders charged with reviewing fidelity, program implementation, and the service delivery system. The committee develops written action plans aimed at developing or sustaining high fidelity services.

People in high-level positions can authorize organizational changes. For example, upper-level managers can develop plans to implement weekly mental health treatment team meetings. Examples of people to include in the steering committee are clinical director, quality assurance director, and/or chief operating officer. Agency leaders, along with the IPS supervisor, develop steering committees to review fidelity reports and develop action plans for better fidelity. They also consider ways to increase access to IPS, to encourage more people to consider employment, to collaborate with local schools and training programs, etc. The committee includes a diverse group of stakeholders (e.g., clients, family members, mental health supervisors, employment/education specialists, and state Vocational Rehabilitation counselors). Committee members may not develop action steps for each fidelity item scored lower than 5, but develop a plan that they believe is manageable. Reviewers ask to see a copy of the most recent fidelity plan. Examples of fidelity action plans can be found in Fidelity Tools near the end of this manual.

Example

The executive director (CEO) attends one steering committee each year and the quality assurance director attends quarterly. Reviewers give credit for this component.

COMPONENT 4: The agency CEO/Executive Director communicates how SE services support the mission of the agency and articulates clear and specific goals for SE and/or competitive employment to all agency staff during the first six months and at least annually (i.e., SE kickoff, all-agency meetings, agency newsletters, etc.). This item is not delegated to another administrator.

Support from the executive director is critical to good program implementation. If administrators and practitioners do not believe that IPS is important to the director, then they may neglect to make difficult changes.

Examples

Practitioners report that the executive director spoke about IPS and employment six months ago at the IPS kickoff. Reviewers give credit for this component.

Mental health practitioners report that the executive director visited their treatment team meetings a couple of months ago. They said that she spoke about recovery and how employment is an important part of recovery. Reviewers give credit for this component.

COMPONENT 5: SE program leader shares information about EBP barriers and facilitators with the executive team (including the CEO) at least twice each year. The executive team helps the program leader identify and implement solutions to barriers.

Meetings between the IPS supervisor and agency executive director may include other people, for example the clinical director, and may be as short as 20 minutes. What is important is that the person who knows the program best can share successes and ask for help directly. By doing so, he helps the executive director remember about, and feel invested in, the IPS program.

Reviewers ask for examples of ways that the executive team has helped the program resolve problems. For example, executive team members may have reallocated funds to create an additional IPS specialist position in response to an IPS waiting list. Another example is that the executive director met with a regional state Vocational Rehabilitation director to discuss how to collaborate with Vocational Rehabilitation counselors.

Examples

Some agency leaders report that although the IPS supervisor does not have direct access to the executive team, he reports to someone who can relay information about IPS to executive leaders. This arrangement is insufficient. Instead, the IPS supervisor should have direct access to executive team members at least twice each year so that she can talk with the people who can help her program.

The executive team invites the IPS supervisor to attend part of their meeting twice each year. The supervisor said she reports on the program's successes and challenges and asks for help as needed. As a result of the meetings, the executive director agreed that the mental health treatment teams should meet weekly instead of monthly. The medical director said she has been talking to the psychiatrists about the importance of work because the IPS supervisor reported that psychiatrists were not consistently supportive. Reviewers give credit for this component.

An IPS program is implemented in a rehabilitation agency that does not provide mental health treatment. The IPS specialists coordinate services with the local mental health agency practitioners. The IPS supervisor meets with the executive team of the rehabilitation agency twice a year to discuss the status of the IPS program. She does not meet with the executive team at the mental health agency. Reviewers give credit. Note: While it is not a requirement for the IPS supervisor to meet with the executive team at the mental health agency, one member of the executive team from the mental health agency attends the IPS steering committee at the rehabilitation agency (third component of this item) and learns about implementation challenges.

Sample questions for executive team members

Executive director and clinical director: Please describe the IPS program. How is IPS different than other employment programs? (If either of those people defers to the IPS supervisor or another person to answer, reviewers should redirect their questions to the executive director and clinical director.)

What changes have you made in order to improve fidelity to supported employment?
What changes will you make in the future?

(To the executive director): Have there been opportunities for you to talk to agency staff about IPS supported employment? How do you share your goals for competitive employment? (Reviewers: if others attempt to answer for the executive director about what he or she has done, address your question to the executive director again).

(To the executive director): Do you ever talk directly with the IPS supervisor?

Is fidelity part of the quality assurance process? For example, does the quality assurance process monitor fidelity scores? Does the quality assurance process include client outcomes for IPS supported employment? May we review a recent quality assurance report (or to see the section of the report related to IPS)?

Do you have an IPS steering committee or leadership committee? Who participates in the meetings? What has been the focus of the meetings? How often does the group meet? Does anyone from the executive team participate in the steering committee?

How does the IPS supervisor share information about the program with the executive team? How has the executive team helped with program implementation or sustainability?

Describe the relationship between state Vocational Rehabilitation counselors and IPS practitioners? Has the executive team been able to help build a stronger partnership?

Sample questions for the IPS supervisor

Do you have access to the executive leadership at this agency (for example, the executive director, quality assurance director, and medical director) to ask for help with the IPS program? How have they helped? Do they understand the challenges to implementation and sustainability, as well as recent successes?

Do you have a steering committee or leadership meeting for IPS? Who participates in the meetings? What has been the focus of the meetings? Are they helpful? How often does the group meet?

Is there a fidelity action plan? May we see a copy?

Does the executive director prioritize competitive employment for agency clients?

Sample questions for IPS staff, mental health treatment team members, and peer specialists who are not part of the IPS program

Does the executive director think that employment is a critical component of services at this agency? What gives you that impression?

What is the difference between “competitive employment” and other types of employment?

To calculate the score for this item:

Determine the total number of components present at the time of review. Score using the 1-5 anchors as appropriate.

Services

1. Work Incentives Planning

All clients are offered assistance in obtaining comprehensive, individualized work incentives planning before starting a new job and assistance accessing work incentives planning thereafter when making decisions about changes in work hours and pay. Work incentives planning includes SSA benefits, medical benefits, medication subsidies, housing subsidies, food stamps, spouse and dependent children benefits, past job retirement benefits, and any other source of income. Clients are provided information and assistance about reporting earnings to SSA, housing programs, VA programs, etc., depending on the person's benefits.

Possible sources of information for this item include:

- Client record reviews
- Interview with benefits planners
- Review of benefit planning reports
- Interviews with IPS specialists
- Interview with state Vocational Rehabilitation counselors
- Interviews with clients
- Interviews with mental health practitioners

Rationale: In order to make decisions about work, job seekers and workers need accurate information about their individual situations. Many people do not work because they fear losing disability benefits. Others would like to work enough to support themselves and exit the benefit system. Comprehensive information about how work will affect each person's financial situation is critical.

Work incentives planning (also known as benefits counseling) helps people make informed choices. In IPS, people have access to comprehensive, accurate information about how disability benefits and other government entitlements will be affected by a return to work.

Fidelity is not affected whether work incentives planners are employed by the agency that houses IPS or by another agency. What is important is that clients have access to benefits counseling and receive accurate, comprehensive information. Benefits counselors should

have intensive training with frequent updates. In the United States, an example is Certified Work Incentives Trainers (CWIC) training at Virginia Commonwealth University www.vcu-ntc.org/certification/ .

In the United States, work incentives planners:

- Provide information about a person's total income based on part-time or full-time work.
- Provide information about different sources of income such as food stamps, housing subsidies, disability benefits, and veteran's benefits.
- Provide information about the effect of work on a spouse's or dependent child's benefits.
- Help people develop plans to exit the benefit system, if preferred.
- Help people make use of the Social Security Administration's work incentives including Plans for Achieving Self Sufficiency (PASS plans) and Impairment Related Work Expenses (IRWEs).
- Provide people with individualized scenarios of how their benefits (and total income) would be affected by different levels of earnings.
- Are available to help on more than one occasion (e.g., if a person has additional questions or needs to make decisions about a job).

It is not necessary for every client to meet with a benefits planner. Some people do not receive benefits and have no need for information about benefits while others do not want to meet with a benefits planner. This may be especially true for programs that serve young people because practitioners may encourage them to try employment rather than apply for disability benefits as a first option.

Individualized planning refers to providing information related to each person's situation in order to make informed decisions. For example, "If you made \$500 a month, you would lose your food stamps (\$25) but your Social Security Disability Income would not be affected. Your total monthly income would be XXX. If you made \$1,000 a month..."

Reviewers do not score higher than 2 when work incentives planning consists only of explaining the rules for entitlements.

When an IPS specialist provides benefits planning, reviewers ask how he was trained and whether he participates in ongoing training. They ask if the specialist is able to provide information about a variety of sources of benefits and if he can help when a client has a spouse or dependent who also receives benefits (because their benefits may be affected by the person's earned income).

Examples

Agency administrators report that mental health practitioners give people basic information about how their Social Security benefits would be affected by work. Mental health practitioners learn about benefits by reading the Social Security Administration's Red Book. Reviewers do not score higher than 3.

IPS specialists report that they refer most people for benefits planning, but less than 20% of program participants meet with a benefits planner. Reviewers assign a score of 2 and recommend that specialists or family members help clients attend the appointments. They also encourage the IPS supervisor to monitor how many people access benefits planning until IPS specialists routinely follow up on referrals.

Reviewers determine that benefits planning offered is adequate for people who receive Social Security benefits only, but not for people receiving veteran's benefits or multiple sources of benefits. They do not score higher than 3.

The IPS specialists only refer people for benefits planning prior to starting a job and do not help clients obtain more information as they make decisions about job changes. Reviewers do not score higher than 4.

When IPS specialists do not help any workers with monthly reporting (sending information about earned income to entitlement agencies), reviewers do not score higher than 4. IPS specialists would not be expected to help every worker with income reporting as some workers report their income independently. But some people benefit from side-by-side assistance and others benefit from reminders to report earned income.

Reviewers learn that people wait a month or longer to meet with a benefits planner. They include a comment that some people may become discouraged and lose interest in employment due to the wait for benefits planning. The score, however, is not lowered unless the wait is so long that people must make decisions about jobs without good information.

A benefits planner comes to the agency each month to present on work incentives for people who receive Social Security benefits. People who receive other types of benefits meet individually with the benefits planner. Reviewers do not score above 3.

A benefits planner comes to the agency each month to present on Social Security Administration work incentives to family members. Clients meet individually with benefits planners and may invite family members or other support people to join their individual meetings. This is consistent with good fidelity.

Sample questions for IPS specialists

What type of benefits counseling is available for people in this program? Who provides benefits planning?

How do you keep track of which people receive benefits planning and which people do not meet with a benefits planner?

What do you do if someone does not attend a benefits appointment?

How many of the people on your caseload have participated in benefits planning?

Do you know if people receive examples of what would happen to their total income if they worked part or full time? Do they receive written examples to refer to later?

Do you ever help clients report their earnings? Can you give an example?

Have you ever helped someone receive benefits planning a second or third time because of a change in income?

Sample questions for IPS peer specialists

Do you ever accompany people to appointments with benefits planners? Is the information clear and comprehensive?

Do most people in the IPS program receive benefits planning?

What would improve benefits planning?

Does the benefits planner give people written information to refer to later? Is it helpful information?

Sample questions for the work incentives planner

Do you provide information regarding benefits other than Social Security? For instance, if someone receives veteran's benefits, can you help that person? If a person has a spouse or dependent who also receives benefits, can you provide good information about how her earnings would affect other people in the family? Can you provide information about housing subsidies? Food stamps?

How did you receive training in work incentives? Have you participated in training (or have you received updates) during the past year? Please describe.

Do you provide people with written information about their personal situations? Would it be possible to see a sample report?

Do you meet with people in person or by phone?

Are you able to tell people how their total income will be affected by part or full-time work? Can you provide individualized information or do you provide information about work incentive rules?

When someone is referred to you, how long is it before the person meets with you?

Sample questions for clients

Did anyone ask if you would be interested in learning how your benefits would be affected by a return to work? What happened next?

Did the person who gave information about benefits talk to you about all the sources of income that you have? For example, Social Security, food stamps, or housing assistance? Did she ask about the amount of money that you receive from each source?

Did the person who gave you information provide any examples? For instance, did he tell you what would happen if you worked part time or full time?

Did the information help you? Was it understandable?

After the appointment, did you receive a report to help you remember the details? Was the report specific to you and the benefits that you receive, or was it a list of rules that apply to everyone who gets benefits?

Did anyone tell you how to report your earnings after you went back to work? Did she tell you how to do that for each source of income?

Did anyone help you report your earnings to Social Security Administration or other entitlement systems? Would you have wanted help?

Sample questions for case managers, counselors, mental health treatment team members

When a working person transitions from the IPS program, what do you do when her income changes? Can you refer the person to benefits counseling? Have you ever done so?

Do most people in the IPS program get good information about how their benefits would be affected by earned income?

Sample questions for state Vocational Rehabilitation counselors

How do people receive information about working and benefits? Is this service available for all of the people who need it? Do clients receive helpful information that is specific to their individual situations?

To calculate the score for this item:

Determine the amount of assistance clients receive for comprehensive incentives planning. Score using the 1-5 anchors as appropriate.

2. Disclosure

Employment specialists provide clients with accurate information and assist with evaluating their choices to make an informed decision regarding what is revealed to the employer about having a disability.

Components of this item:

- Employment specialists do not require all clients to disclose their psychiatric disability at the work site in order to receive services.
- Employment specialists discuss with clients the possible costs and benefits (pros and cons) of disclosure at the work site in advance of clients disclosing at the work site. Employment specialists describe how disclosure is related to requesting accommodations and the employment specialist's role communicating with the employer.
- Employment specialists discuss specific information to be disclosed (e.g., disclose receiving mental health treatment, or presence of a disability, or difficulty with anxiety, or unemployed for a period of time, etc.) and offers examples of what could be said to employers.
- Employment specialists discuss disclosure on more than one occasion (e.g., if clients have not found employment after two months or if clients report difficulties on the job).

Possible sources of information for this item include:

Client record reviews

Client interviews

IPS specialist interviews (including role-plays about disclosure discussions)

IPS supervisor interviews

Family member interviews

Mental health practitioner interviews

Rationale: Many job seekers are concerned with stigma about mental illness, or do not wish to focus on problems or disabilities while moving forward in their lives. Other people appreciate advocacy from IPS specialists while applying for jobs, considering more schooling and/or requesting accommodations. The essence of this item is that people should have choice about whether to share information, what information to share, and with whom. IPS specialists help each person consider his options and abide by client choice.

A worksheet about disclosure (titled Plan for Approaching Employers) is located in Sample Program Forms near the end of this manual. When specialists use this worksheet or another similar form with their clients, reviewers assign a score of 3 or higher. When specialists use a comprehensive disclosure worksheet and it is apparent that they elicit their client's perspectives about the possible benefits or costs related to disclosure, rather

than the specialist giving his own opinions, reviewers rate 4 or higher. For a score of 5, reviewers must also find evidence that IPS specialists discuss disclosure with some people on more than one occasion.

COMPONENT 1: Employment specialists do not require all clients to disclose their psychiatric disability at the work site in order to receive services.

Every job seeker and worker is asked about his preferences for disclosing a disability (or his involvement in the IPS program) to employers. Students are asked about disclosing a disability to the Office of Student Services (sometimes known as the Office for Students with Disabilities), and professors/teachers, as needed.

Examples

Some IPS specialists report that they are unwilling to help with job development unless clients are willing to disclose. Others on the team offer choice, but encourage people to disclose a disability to employers. Reviewers do not give credit for this component.

One IPS specialist says, “It is up to clients to choose whether or not they wish to disclose, but people don’t want to disclose because they worry about stigma.” The two specialists in the IPS unit estimate that 90% of their clients do not want to disclose having a disability. Unless reviewers find convincing evidence that specialists discuss disclosure in an impartial manner, they do not give credit for this component.

Reviewers ask clients if they remember discussions about whether the IPS specialist will contact employers on their behalf. Some people report that they would like IPS specialists to advocate for them but did not know about this option. Reviewers do not give credit for this component.

COMPONENT 2: Employment specialists discuss with clients the possible costs and benefits (pros and cons) of disclosure at the work site in advance of clients disclosing at the work site. Employment specialists describe how disclosure is related to requesting accommodations and the employment specialist’s role communicating with the employer.

In order to receive credit, the specialists help people think about the possible costs or benefits in an impartial manner. They ask the client to talk about the pros and cons from her perspective and withhold sharing their own opinions.

Example

In individual meetings, reviewers ask IPS specialists to role-play talking about disclosure with them. Three of the four specialists ask the “client” (reviewer) about her opinions regarding the possible benefits and risks. “Do you have any concerns about disclosing a disability to potential employers? What do you think the possible benefits could be?” The fourth specialist says that he tells people that the benefit is that he can help them find work sooner if he can speak to employers on their behalf, but a possible risk is that some employers may not want to hire people who have mental health problems. Reviewers give credit for this component because most of the team is doing this task well. They also make recommendations for training and supervision to improve consistency in IPS specialist performance. The report does not identify which specialist needs more help.

COMPONENT 3: Employment specialists discuss specific information to be disclosed (e.g., disclose receiving mental health treatment, or presence of a disability, or difficulty with anxiety, or unemployed for a period of time, etc.) and offers examples of what could be said to employers.

Though IPS specialists should be truthful with employers, they can agree to keep some information private. If an employer wants information that the specialist does not have permission to share, she explains that she does not have permission to share that level of personal information and/or offers to introduce the job seeker so that the employer can ask the person directly.

Example

An IPS specialist says to her clients, “I tell employers that the job seekers I know have had mental health issues, such as depression or anxiety, but are ready to work and have a variety of skills and abilities. I will not share your diagnosis, medications, or treatment history. How does that sound to you?” This is an example of good fidelity.

COMPONENT 4: Employment specialists discuss disclosure on more than one occasion (e.g., if clients have not found employment after two months or if clients report difficulties on the job).

Specialists discuss disclosure with people at different times. For example, some job seekers like to decide about disclosure for each business contacted. If a job seeker has been looking for jobs for over two months the IPS specialist may ask what he would like to change about his job search, including whether he would like to change his decision about disclosure of a disability.

Example

IPS specialists give examples of situations in which they brought up disclosure on more than one occasion. For example, “I was working with a person who did not want to disclose that she was working with me until she began to have problems on her job. We spoke about how I might be able to help ask for an accommodation, and she decided to give it a try.” This example indicates good fidelity.

Sample questions for IPS specialists

If you were going to help me with a job search, how would you explain disclosure? What if I said that I wasn’t sure whether or not I should disclose? What if I said that I didn’t want to share information about my mental illness?

Do you ever bring up disclosure on more than one occasion? If so, when would you have another discussion about disclosure? Can you give me an example?

I am guessing that some people on your caseload are okay with disclosure and some are not. About what percentage of people on your caseload choose to disclose?

Sample questions for IPS peer specialists

Do you ever help people consider whether to disclose a disability or not? What do you say in those discussions? What would you say to someone who is unsure whether or not to disclose to potential employers?

Sample questions for clients

Does your IPS specialist talk to employers on your behalf—to advocate for them to hire you? Were you asked if you wanted the specialist to do that?

Do you remember talking to your employment specialist about disclosure—letting employers know that you get services from ABC mental health agency? What do you remember about that conversation?

Does your IPS specialist have contact with your employer now? How did you decide that you did (or didn’t) want your specialist to talk to your employer?

Sample questions for IPS supervisors

How do you train new specialists to talk about disclosure?

What are some important guidelines for IPS specialists to consider when they discuss disclosure with clients?

To calculate the score for this item:

Determine the total number of components present at the time of review. Score using the 1-5 anchors as appropriate.

3. Ongoing, Work-based Vocational Assessment

Initial vocational assessment occurs over 2-3 sessions and is updated with information from work experiences in competitive jobs. A vocational profile form that includes information about preferences, experiences, skills, current adjustment, strengths, personal contacts, etc., is updated with each new job experience. Aims at problem solving using environmental assessments and consideration of reasonable accommodations. Sources of information include the client, treatment team, clinical records, and with the client’s permission, from family members and previous employers.

Possible sources of information for this item include:

- Client record reviews
- Data from the IPS supervisor
- Client interviews
- IPS specialist interviews
- IPS peer specialist interviews
- Family member interviews
- Mental health practitioner interviews

Rationale: In IPS supported employment, people learn about their strengths and preferences just as other people do – by working in regular jobs. The vocational assessment (referred to as the “career profile”) leads to individualized employment and education planning. The career profile is updated with each new employment and education experience.

IPS specialists typically provide services somewhat differently from each other. Reviewers gather as much information as possible, rate each specialist, and then calculate the average.

The essence of this item is that people are not asked to complete vocational evaluations (e.g., paper and pencil vocational tests, interest tests, and work samples), situational assessments (such as short-term work experiences), prevocational groups, volunteer jobs, short-term sheltered work experiences, or other types of assessment in order to receive assistance obtaining a competitive job. Instead, the IPS specialist typically spends a few weeks talking with the client, the case manager/service coordinator, psychiatrist, housing staff, and with permission, family members and previous employers and educators. The purpose is not to determine employability, but to learn what the person enjoys, his skills and experiences, and what will help him achieve his goals. For example, team members think about work environments that promote recovery for people with substance use disorders. In some situations they also consider job accommodations, such as working part time. Information is gathered into a career profile. The career profile is updated with each new job experience and educational experience to preserve lessons learned from the person's experiences.

Supports for education and training are consistent with good fidelity even if completing an educational program postpones the job search. IPS specialists help with education and training programs that are related to a career goal and that are available to the public (not set aside for people who have disabilities).

When people have internships, reviewers spend extra time learning about those positions. They ask how the position is related to the person's employment goal—is she performing work that is related to what she wants to do? They ask if the worker is earning income or school credit from the internship. Is this type of intern position available to people who do not have disabilities? They question whether it is necessary to complete an internship to obtain employment in the person's chosen field. Finally, they ask the worker about her opinion of the internship—does she enjoy what she is doing and does she feel that it will improve her chances of reaching her career goals? If the internship is essentially a volunteer position, reviewers lower the score depending upon the number of people who have volunteer jobs (see scale anchors for this item).

Examples

When most people participate in vocational evaluations, regardless of the reason (e.g. authorized by a Vocational Rehabilitation counselor or because the employment program has a vocational evaluator), reviewers score this item 1. If a small percentage of people in the IPS supported employment program are asked to complete evaluations, reviewers may select a higher score. For example, if during the past six months, 20% of people in an IPS program completed an evaluation, reviewers rate this item 3.

IPS specialists do not routinely use vocational tests or situational assessments, though reviewers hear about two situations in which people engaged in situational assessments (short-term, paid, work experiences) because they heard that Vocational Rehabilitation counselors offered this service and believed that it would be helpful. Reviewers score 5 because the number of situational assessments was small and because IPS specialists did not encourage assessments.

When IPS specialists do not use a comprehensive career profile similar to the one in the Sample Program Forms near the end of this manual, reviewers score 3 or lower.

When IPS specialists do not complete the work history in the career profile, reviewers score 3 or lower even if a resume is in the client's record. In this case the specialist is not gathering information about what the person liked or disliked about prior jobs, why jobs ended, how the person found those jobs, how the person managed mental health symptoms on the jobs, how she got along with co-workers and supervisors, etc.

When most profiles do not include information from sources other than the person, such as family members, mental health practitioners, housing staff, etc., the score is 3 or lower.

IPS specialists update the career profile with information each time a person starts a job, ends a job, or engages in an educational experience. Without these updates, reviewers score the item 4 or lower. Examples of forms to update the profile (Job Start Report, Job End Report, Educational Experience Report) are in Sample Program Forms near the end of this manual.

For a score of 5, reviewers need evidence that the IPS team helps people analyze each job/education experience for lessons learned. What did the person enjoy about the job/schooling? What would have helped to improve the job match? Better supports?

Sample questions for IPS specialists

How long does it take to complete the career profile? What happens after you fill it out—do you refer to it again for ideas that will help a job search, job support? Do you add information to it?

What are sources of information for the profile?

Do you have clients who would benefit from a vocational evaluation or situational assessment? Please explain.

In the past six months, how many people on your caseload have completed a vocational evaluation or situational assessment?

Do you ever suggest volunteer work in order to learn about a person's work behaviors and work skills?

Sample questions for IPS peer specialists

Do you ever suggest assessments to help people prepare for the right job, or to determine if someone is ready for work? Does anyone at the agency ever make those suggestions?

Sample questions for IPS supervisors

Do you track the number of people who participate in vocational evaluation or situational assessments?

Do you track the number of people who volunteer? Why do people volunteer?

How do IPS specialists gather information to determine ideas for job types and job supports?

Is anyone in the program working as an intern? What criteria do you use to distinguish internships from volunteer positions?

Sample questions for state Vocational Rehabilitation counselors

Do you ever suggest a vocational evaluation or situational assessment for someone? Under what circumstances would you do that? How often?

Sample questions for clients

When you first met the IPS specialist, what did you talk about? What happened after that first meeting?

Were you asked to do any vocational testing or participate in a job tryout?

To calculate the score for this item:

Determine the thoroughness of the initial vocational assessment (without prevocational requirements) and the frequency with which the agency updates the assessment. Score using the 1-5 anchors as appropriate.

4. Rapid Job Search for Competitive Job

Initial employment assessment and first face-to-face employer contact by the client or the employment specialist about a competitive job occurs within 30 days (one month) after program entry.

Possible sources of information for this item include:

- Data from the IPS supervisor
- Client record reviews
- Client interviews
- IPS specialist interviews
- IPS peer specialist interviews
- Family member interviews

Rationale: The purpose of this fidelity item is to ensure that clients are assisted in contacting employers directly about competitive jobs, rather than participating in lengthy vocational counseling, prevocational groups or work adjustment programs. The timing of the job search is determined by the individual not by program requirements. When people say that they want to work, IPS specialists focus on the person's goal and begin the job search right away. The person may want to apply for jobs directly or to learn about different types of work. When a person wants to begin an educational program, the IPS specialist and the potential student visit educational institutions right away. Visits to schools can include, for example, learning about what programs are offered, meeting with financial aid advisors, and meeting with an advisor to learn about the requirements for different degrees and certificates.

To calculate rapid job search, use date of the client's first appointment with the IPS specialist as program entry date.

Reviewers talk to clients and IPS specialists to learn when the job search begins. They also read client records and count the number of days from first client appointment with an IPS specialist to first employer contact by the specialist and/or job seeker. In calculating the score for this item, reviewers should use recent enrollees to the IPS program. Specifically, once an IPS participant has been included in the calculation for rapid job search, he/she should not be included in future fidelity reviews in the calculation for determining the score on this item.

Reviewers ask the IPS supervisor if he tracks the number of days from when the client first meets with an IPS specialist to the first employer contact. If the supervisor does not track this information, they do not score higher than 4. If the supervisor does track this information, reviewers compare examples of what is documented to what they read in client records to ensure accuracy. If there are inconsistencies, they ask the supervisor to help them understand the differences.

Reviewers determine the median number of days to first employer contact, rather than the arithmetic mean (the fidelity scale states that reviewers should use “the average,” which is usually interpreted as the mean). The reason for using the median is that it prevents a few extreme examples from significantly altering the score. To calculate the median, rank order the number of days from lowest to highest. The median number is the number in the middle of the list. If there is an even number of days listed, add the two middle numbers and divide their total by two.

To score this item, only employer contacts that are made in person are counted. Contacts by phone or email are not included in the calculation. For example, if an IPS specialist spoke by phone to an employer 21 days after a job seeker entered the IPS program and met that employer 34 days after the job seeker entered the program, reviewers would note the example of 34 days. Reviewers may explain in their comments that IPS specialists sometimes call or email employers, but that in-person contacts are best for building relationships.

In most cases, employer contacts are focus on job searches. Occasionally, specialists may help people learn about different types of jobs by visiting workplaces, talking to employees, and observing people at work. This is consistent with good fidelity and these examples are included in the calculation.

In-person contact may be made by the IPS specialist, client, or both people together. An example is when an IPS specialist goes with a job seeker to follow up on a job application and they speak to a hiring manager.

When a person says he wants an IPS specialist to speak with employers on his behalf, but the specialist has not done so, reviewers count the number of days from the first IPS appointment to the day of the fidelity visit and include that example in the calculation. They may also comment about client preferences under **Individualized Job Search**.

Examples

The IPS supervisor does not track the number of days to first employer contact. Reviewers read client records and find the following:

3 11 26 28 (29 31) 33 35 43 84

Reviewers rank order the number of days (list the examples from lowest to highest). There is an even number of examples so they average the two numbers in the middle. (Add the two numbers and divide by 2: $29 + 31 = 60$. 60 divided by $2 = 30$.) The median is 30 days. Because the supervisor does not track this information, reviewers score 4.

Examples of days to first employer contact include the following:

2 6 7 8 21 22 (33) 39 44 50 55 57 94

The median (number in the middle) is 33, so the score is 4.

The IPS supervisor tracks the number of days between first IPS appointments and in-person employer contacts. During each team meeting he asks if anyone met a new client during the week, whether anyone made a first employer contact on behalf of a job seeker during the week, and if any job seekers contacted an employer independently (first contact) during the week. The data he provides to reviewers since the last fidelity review is listed below:

3 7 9 11 15 17 19 (25 28) 29 31 31 32 36 48 52

The median number of days is 26.5. Since the supervisor tracks the data, the score is 5.

An IPS program requirement is that people with substance use disorders engage in treatment groups prior to entering the IPS supported employment program. While reviewers lower the score for item **Zero Exclusion Criteria**, they still rate item **Rapid Search for Competitive Job** based on the median number of days between the first appointments with an employment specialist and the first in-person contact with an employer.

Reviewers learn that people often wait two to three months from referral to meeting with an employment specialist for the first time. They comment on this information in the report and recommend that IPS specialists engage people more quickly, but they do not lower the score for item **Rapid Job Search for Competitive Job**.

Sample questions for clients

After you first met with the IPS specialist, about how long was it before you started contacting employers about a job? If it was more than a month, what slowed things down? Was that the right pace for you?

Sample questions for family members

How quickly did the employment specialist help your family member connect with employers?

Do you know what determined the timing for starting the job search?

Sample questions for IPS specialists

What happens after you first meet someone? Please describe your first few meetings.

About how long does it take to start the job search? Are there ever any exceptions? Why would those exceptions occur?

To calculate the score for this item:

Determine the average number of days between entry to the IPS program and first face-to-face contact with an employer for each IPS Specialist. Add the average days for each IPS specialist and divide by the number of specialists. Score using the 1-5 anchors as appropriate.

5. Individualized Job Search

Employment specialists make employer contacts aimed at making a good job match based on clients' preferences (relating to what each person enjoys and their personal goals) and needs (including experience, ability, symptomatology, health etc.) rather than the job market (i.e., those jobs that are readily available). An individualized job search plan is developed and updated with information from the vocational assessment/profile form and new job/educational experiences.

Possible sources of information for this item include:

- Client interviews
- Client record reviews
- Observation of the vocational unit meeting
- Observation of the mental health treatment team meeting(s)
- IPS specialists interviews
- IPS peer specialist interviews
- State Vocational Rehabilitation counselor interviews
- Family member interviews
- IPS supervisor interview

Rationale: IPS specialists learn about jobs that are consistent with each person's stated interests. They also take other factors into consideration, such as work experience, education and training, skills and talents. They talk to each person about her previous job experiences—what the person enjoyed, what contributed to the person's success, what did not go well, how the person got along with co-workers and supervisors, how the person found jobs, and why the person left each position. They help people think of jobs that will highlight their strengths and minimize potential problems, just as any other person seeking employment considers what would be a good job match. They understand that a person's strengths are what will help him succeed at work, but also that people do not want to repeat negative past experiences. Some employment preferences are not

related to job type but instead to job location, level of pay, work environment, work shift, or other factors. IPS specialists listen to what is most important to each person.

When people do not want IPS specialists to talk to employers on their behalf, specialists (with the job seeker's permission) independently learn about requirements of different jobs, the range of local employers, and the business needs of employers and they share what they learn with job seekers.

IPS specialists learn about educational and training programs in their areas. For example, they find out about the types of programs, the length of programs, and whether programs include hands-on or academic learning. They are able to describe how many graduates find employment and options for paying tuition. The IPS specialist offers to go with the person to visit schools or training programs that offer certificates/degrees in fields related to the person's interests. To help someone select an occupation, they may help the person set up informational interviews with people who work in that field and talk to state Vocational Rehabilitation counselors.

IPS specialists help each person develop written job search (or education) plans that include the person's job preferences and what each person will do to find a job. If each employment plan reads, "Client will look for a part-time job," then the plans are not individualized. A good standard is that IPS team members can identify plans for different job seekers even without seeing the individuals' names. Sample job search plans are located in Sample Program Forms at the end of this manual. The individualized job search plan is updated with information from the career profile and new job and school experiences.

When a job seeker says he will take any job, the IPS specialist helps him think of jobs that he will find satisfying and that will be good matches. Sometimes it is helpful to have a discussion about the types of jobs that he would never want. IPS specialists refrain from recommending jobs that are available in the job market but are unrelated to the individual's job search plan. Except for situations in which people are on the verge of homelessness or in other dire circumstances, IPS specialists focus on individual job searches.

Reviewers do not try to evaluate whether employer contacts made by *clients* were individualized if the client initiates this contact. However, if the IPS specialist urges a client to make contact with a business "because they are hiring" (or some other reason unrelated to client preferences) reviewers should take this information under consideration.

Examples

When there is no evidence of documented job search plans reviewers do not score higher than 3.

IPS specialists base most job searches on stated employment goals without further exploration. They do not help people think about job matches based on strengths, lessons learned from previous jobs, personality, what the person enjoys, symptoms (if present) substance use (if applicable), etc. They do not attempt to share information about jobs that people may not know about. Reviewers do not score higher than 2.

Job search plans include goals such as “customer service, kitchen work or janitorial.” Reviewers ask why people are looking for such diverse jobs and not specific jobs that will suit their interests, personalities, etc.

IPS specialists encourage people with legal histories to take whatever jobs they can find in order to develop work histories. Reviewers do not score higher than 3 because although legal histories can limit job opportunities in some countries, specialists still help people consider which jobs they are qualified for that they will enjoy. They do not assume they know which employers will hire people with legal histories but help job seekers explore opportunities by visiting employers to talk about their strengths and explain how they are changing their lives for the better.

Sample questions for clients

How did you decide to apply for (the job you just applied for OR the job you have)?

What types of jobs are you and your IPS specialist looking for? Why do you think that type of job is right for you?

What type of job would you enjoy?

What are your strengths and skills? How do those pertain to the jobs you are seeking (or the job you have)?

Sample questions for IPS peer specialists

Do you help people consider what jobs are good matches?

Does anyone ever have unrealistic job preferences? What do you do in those situations?

Do you ever help people explore new options for employment other than the types of jobs they have had in the past? Please tell me about that.

Sample questions for IPS specialists

How did you decide which employers to contact for (name of client)? How did you decide which type of jobs?

What jobs do you recommend for people who have not worked in many years?

What jobs do you recommend for people who have legal histories?

Please tell me about someone who needed a very specific type of job. How did you help that person find the right job?

Do you ever suggest jobs to clients? How do you decide what type of jobs to suggest?

Does the case manager/service coordinator or psychiatrist help you and your clients think of good job matches? What is an example?

If the IPS specialist says she helped a person look for a certain type of work because that is the kind of work he had done in the past: Did you help him explore other options for employment? How did you do that?

Why does the person want to do a _____ job?

Sample questions for state Vocational Rehabilitation counselors

Do the IPS specialists help your clients search for positions that are related to their preferences, skills, and needs?

Please tell me about someone who needed a very specific type of job. How did you and the specialist help the person find the right position?

Do the IPS specialists know about a wide range of job types available in this community? Do they know about most of the educational and career training programs in the area?

Are you able to help with educational and career training goals?

Sample questions for family members

Please tell me about the job your family member has (or is seeking). Is that the right position for him? Why or why not? What position would be a better match?

Sample questions for IPS supervisors

Please tell us about the last time that you helped an IPS specialist think about possible good job matches for a job seeker. What suggestions did you make? Why did you think that your suggestions would be appealing to the job seeker?

Have you met most of the people served by the IPS specialists?

Do you know about most of the educational and career training programs in this area? How did you learn about what is available?

To calculate the score for this item:

Determine the percent of employer contacts made by the IPS specialists that are based on job choices that reflect client preferences. Score using the 1-5 anchors as appropriate.

6. Job Development - Frequent Employer Contact

Each employment specialist makes at least 6 face-to-face employer contacts per week on behalf of clients looking for work. (Rate for each then calculate average and use the closest scale point.) An employer contact is counted even when an employment specialist meets the same employer more than one time in a week, and when the client is present or not present. Client-specific and generic contacts are included. Employment specialists use a weekly tracking form to document employer contacts.

Possible sources of information:

- Review of employer contact logs
- Data from the IPS supervisor
- IPS specialist interviews

Rationale: Some IPS specialists are nervous about connecting with employers and may avoid this part of their job. Submitting the number of in-person employer visits that they make each week keep IPS specialists focused on visiting employers. Supervisors use the contact logs to help specialists think of follow-up visits with employers and to determine which IPS specialists need help with job development.

In IPS supported employment, clients are encouraged to participate in the job search as much as possible. Many people with serious mental illness or other challenges are better than anyone else at engaging employers, learning about their needs, and marketing themselves to employers. Many people are also skilled in explaining their recovery experiences when those are pertinent to a job. But when people do not complete job search tasks independently, IPS specialists always offer to help. The specialists do not insist that they will only help if a person completes assignments between their meetings.

Job development is conducted by making employer contacts to learn about the employer community. To build knowledge about employer needs, IPS specialists make at least six face-to-face contacts with hiring personnel. Job development is usually carried out with or in support of a particular person.

To rate this item, reviewers read two months of employer contact forms for each IPS specialist. Employer contact logs are used to record meetings with employers. A sample employer contact log is located in Sample Program Forms section of this manual. Reviewers read forms for *each* IPS specialist because specialists may vary in regards to employer contacts. They determine the following:

- Whether contacts were made with someone who has hiring authority (these logs are included when calculating the number of employer contacts)

- Whether logs indicate email or phone contacts (these logs are not included when calculating the number of employer contacts)
- Whether contacts were made by clients without the specialist present (client-only contacts are not included in calculating the number of employer contacts)
- Whether some contacts were made with the specialist and job seeker together (these logs are included in calculating the number of employer contacts because the IPS specialist was present)
- Whether the IPS supervisor reviews the contact logs monthly (consistent with good fidelity)

The focus of employer contact for this item is job development. Reviewers do not count employer contacts made after the person starts working and is receiving follow-along support. They also do not include employer contacts made for other purposes such as asking for donations to the agency.

Employer contact logs should include information about whether the contact at the business has hiring authority and whether the contact was in-person.

Review logs for two months for each IPS specialist. Do not rely on data from the supervisor about the average number of contacts made by specialists. After deciding whether the contacts meet the guidelines above, count the number of contacts for each IPS specialist. Exclude specialists who have been in their positions for less than one month. To find the average number, divide the total number of contacts by the number of IPS specialists with more than one month's tenure. The last step is to divide the average number by the number of weeks (eight weeks for the two-month period).

Examples

When an IPS specialist is absent from work for a few days, reviewers do not change the calculation. However, if a specialist was absent from work for a week or more, the absences are part of the calculation. For example, one specialist worked two months without significant absences and made 42 employer contacts while another was out for two weeks and made 24 employer contacts. The total number of contacts is 66, divided by the number of weeks (14) = 4.7. The score is 3.

When it is not possible to determine whether employer contacts were in person or whether the IPS specialist spoke to a person with hiring authority, review some of the logs with the IPS supervisor. If the supervisor is unable to provide additional information about the contacts, rate this item 2. In this case, the logs were not completed fully and the supervisor was not able to monitor the number of employer contacts.

When the average number of in-person employer contacts each week is between 2 and 3, the score is 2. Always round down.

There are two employment specialists; one made 42 contacts over the past eight weeks, and the other made 36. Reviewers score 4 because the specialists made an average of five contacts per week. $42+36=78$ contacts. $78 \text{ contacts}/16 \text{ weeks} = 4.8$ contacts per week on average. The total number of contacts was divided by 16 weeks, because the reviewers looked at logs for two employment specialists over an eight-week period.

The specialists track contacts weekly, but the supervisor does not review the logs; reviewers do not score higher than 2 even if the IPS specialists make an average of six contacts per week. The reason is that supervisors must know if any person on the team needs help setting aside time to visit businesses.

Specialists report that they include phone calls and contacts made by clients (without the specialist) on their contacts logs. Because reviewers do not know which contacts were by phone or which were made by specialists, they do not score higher than 2.

Sample questions for IPS specialists

Do you include phone contacts on your job development (employer contact) logs?

If a client makes an employer contact without you, is that contact included in the logs?

Does your supervisor review your logs with you?

If you meet with a person who has no hiring authority, but shares excellent information about how people are hired, and what positions are available, is that contact included in your employer contact logs?

Have you been away from work for a week or longer during the past two months?

Sample questions for IPS supervisors

Do you review the employer contact logs? How often? How do you know whether the contacts were with someone with hiring authority?

What is your approach if someone is consistently having difficulty making employer contacts?

What is the average number of employer contacts that specialists make each week?

Have any IPS specialists been absent for a week or longer during the past two months?

To calculate the score for this item:

Add the number of employer contacts for the previous two months (eight weeks) for the IPS specialists and divide by the number of specialists. Divide this number by the total number of weeks. Score using the 1-5 anchors as appropriate.

7. Job Development - Quality of Employer Contact

Employment specialists build relationships with employers through multiple visits in person that are planned to learn the needs of the employer, convey what the SE program offers to the employer, describe client strengths that are a good match for the employer. (Rate for each employment specialist, then calculate average and use the closest scale point.)

Possible sources of information for this item include:

- Observation of IPS specialists meeting with employers
- Review of employer contact logs
- Interview with IPS supervisor
- Interviews with IPS specialists
- Interviews with state Vocational Rehabilitation counselors
- Review of employer lists

Rationale: The IPS specialist learns about the needs and preferences of employers in order to introduce them to the right job candidates. Multiple in-person visits demonstrate that the IPS specialist is reliable (she returns as promised) and that she is focused on a long-term relationship with the employer.

All fidelity reviews should include observation of IPS specialists meeting with employers for job development. If there is more than one specialist, reviewers observe both specialists because they do not want to rate the item based on just one person. If there are five IPS specialists, they observe employer contacts made by at least three specialists. At subsequent reviews, fidelity reviewers ask to shadow different IPS specialists.

The focus of the employer contacts observed during the fidelity visit is on employer relationship building (job development) and not support for a working person.

While scheduling the fidelity visit, reviewers request to observe specialists meeting with employers to schedule an appointment *and* meeting with employers to learn about their businesses. When reviewing the draft schedule for the review, they remind the supervisor that they would like to observe both types of visits. When specialists are unable to arrange meetings to learn about businesses during the fidelity visit, reviewers do not score higher than 4 because they do not know how specialists are developing relationships unless they can observe the process.

Reviewers ask IPS specialists to introduce them to employers as a colleague. They do not participate in the conversation unless an employer asks them questions. The reviewer's role is to observe.

If it is not possible to observe employer relationship building, the score is 1. Reviewers do not rely on specialist's descriptions of how they job develop. Reviewers may offer to return to the agency the following week to observe employer meetings if their schedules permit.

Some employment specialists maintain lists of employers they visit over time. The lists indicate the dates that the specialist has visited the business. Employer lists can be a helpful source of information about ongoing employer relationships.

Examples

Reviewer accompanies an IPS specialist while she meets with an employer for 15 minutes to learn about the business and hiring preferences. She asks questions about different positions and the types of candidates the employer feels are a good match for his business. This example is consistent with a score of 5.

Reviewer accompanies an IPS specialist as he meets with an employer for 15 minutes to present information about his program. (Unless the employer requested the information, this example is not consistent with scores higher than 3.)

Reviewer accompanies an IPS specialist to meet with an employer to follow up on a job seeker's application for employment. (Consistent with good fidelity.)

Reviewer shadows an IPS specialist who meets with an employer to describe a job seeker who matches the employer's hiring preferences. (Consistent with good fidelity.)

Reviewer observes an IPS specialist asking an employer to schedule a meeting to learn about a business. (Consistent with good fidelity.)

IPS specialists meet in person with an average of two employers per month. Reviewers score 1 because it does not matter if the specialists are skilled at developing relationships if they rarely meet employers.

Employer contacts focus on asking about job openings. Reviewers score 2.

A reviewer observes a specialist meeting with an employer to learn about her business. The specialist focuses on encouraging the employer to share information, asking questions such as, "What type of person is successful in this job? What jobs do you hire for that I may not know about? What is a typical day like for a swimming instructor?" This specialist is practicing job development with good fidelity. Reviewers average her performance (score 5) with those of her colleagues to select the best score. Reviewers give a score of 4 to one of the other specialists and a score of 5 to the third specialist. $5 + 4 + 5 = 14$. Divide 14 by 3 (specialists) = 4.6. The item is scored 4.

IPS specialists report that they cannot meet with employers without a client present because funding is not available in those situations. Reviewers do not score higher than 3. They recommend that agency leaders and/or the steering committee discuss what funds are available for IPS specialists to build relationships with employers when a client is not present.

Reviewers observe that IPS specialists rarely return after learning about a business unless the manager is hiring. The IPS supervisor agrees that the specialists have difficulty maintaining relationships with employers. Reviewers do not score higher than 4. They recommend that each IPS specialist keeps a list of employers (20-25) whom they visit every six to eight weeks. Employers may have originally been contacted on behalf of a specific client but the IPS specialist may still stay in contact even though the original client is no longer the reason for the contact.

Sample questions for IPS specialists

How do you approach an employer for the first time? What do you say? What do you try to accomplish during that first contact? What would happen next?

Tell me about an employer whom you contacted recently? What was your approach? What happened? Do you have plans to follow up with that employer?

Sample questions for the IPS supervisor

How do you know if specialists follow up with employers on multiple occasions?

Do you help specialists plan which employers they will visit and the purpose of those visits? Please tell us about that.

Sample question for clients

How does the employment specialist help with finding jobs?

To calculate the score for this item:

Add the scores and divide by the number of IPS specialists. Round down (e.g., 3.6 → 3).
Score using the 1-5 anchors as appropriate.

8. Diversity of Job Types

Employment specialists assist clients in obtaining different types of jobs.

Possible sources of information for this item include:

Data from the IPS supervisor

Client record reviews

IPS specialist interviews to ask about job duties, if needed

Rationale: IPS specialists help clients consider a wide range of positions for which they are qualified and are related to their preferences. IPS is an individualized service as indicated by the different types of jobs that people choose. IPS specialists avoid helping people with the same job types that do not meet their preferences.

Reviewers ask for a list of jobs for people who are currently employed. Reviewers should not include jobs that people obtained prior to entering IPS. If there are fewer than 10 jobs, they ask to see a list of job starts for the past six months (so that there will be enough jobs to determine what percent of jobs are diverse). If the number of examples in the past six months is less than 10 for a staff of at least two specialists (or fewer than five for a single specialist), reviewers score this item 1 because the sample size is too small.

When job titles appear similar, reviewers ask the specialists about the job duties for different positions in order to decide if the jobs are the same type. For example, if the job list includes janitorial, maintenance, and housekeeping, reviewers ask about the job duties. If those jobs are essentially vacuuming, dusting and cleaning bathrooms, reviewers consider those jobs to be the same type.

If a job type is represented twice, the score is not affected. If a job type is listed three or more times, the score *is* affected. Three or more of the same job type is not consistent with diverse job types. See examples below.

Examples

There are two IPS specialists in the vocational unit. Ten people are employed in the following positions:

Swimming instructor	Accountant
Medical biller	Dog walker
Cashier	Stocker
Dishwasher	Stocker
Dishwasher	Stocker

Dishwasher is listed only twice so reviewers count both jobs. But stocker is listed three times. Reviewers cross off the third listing of stocker (see below).

Swimming instructor	Accountant
Medical biller	Dog walker
Cashier	Stocker
Dishwasher	Stocker
Dishwasher	Stocker

There are nine diverse job types and ten total jobs. $9 \text{ divided by } 10 = .9 \text{ (90\%)}$. The score is 5.

There are two IPS specialists in the vocational unit. Eleven people are employed in the following positions:

Housekeeper	Grill cook
Driver	Forklift operator
Driver	Assembler
Childcare worker	Dock worker (laborer)
Childcare worker	
Childcare worker	
Childcare worker	

Driver is listed only twice so reviewers count both jobs. Childcare worker is listed four times so reviewers count the first two and cross off the last two for the calculation.

Housekeeper	Grill cook
Driver	Forklift operator
Driver	Assembler
Childcare worker	Dock worker (laborer)
Childcare worker	
Childcare worker	
Childcare worker	

There are nine diverse job types and eleven total jobs. $9 \div 11 = .81$ (81%). The score is 4.

There is one IPS specialist in the vocational unit. Job starts for the past six months include the four positions listed below:

Clerical worker
Customer service worker
Teacher's aide
Librarian

The jobs are diverse, but there is not a large enough sample to score this item. The score is 1.

To calculate the score for this item:

Determine the types of jobs IPS clients of the agency currently hold. Divide the diverse types of jobs by the total number of jobs. Remember, no more than two of the same type of job is counted in the number of diverse jobs. Score using the 1-5 anchors as appropriate.

9. Diversity of Employers

Employment specialists assist clients in obtaining jobs with different employers.

Possible sources of information for this item include:

Data from the IPS supervisor

Client record reviews

IPS specialist interviews to ask about employers, if needed

Rationale: IPS specialists work with the full range of employers in their communities so that they can help clients find jobs related to their individualized needs and preferences. Further, when multiple people from an IPS program work at the same business, there is a risk that they will be stigmatized, or that a person who does not wish to disclose a disability will feel uncomfortable. IPS specialists may occasionally advocate for more than one person to work at the same business (especially in separate departments) but they also discover that the wider their network of employers, the more they are able to provide individualized services.

Reviewers ask for a list of businesses where people are working. If there are fewer than 10 working people, they ask to see a list of job starts for the past six months so that there will be enough employers to determine what percent are diverse. Reviewers should not include jobs obtained prior to entering IPS. If the number of examples in the past six months is less than 10 for a staff of at least two specialists (or fewer than five for a single specialist), they score this item 1 because the sample size is too small.

When an employer is listed twice, reviewers count the employer twice. When an employer is listed three or more times, reviewers should ask if the list includes different store locations for the same employer. For example, if XYZ Store is listed three times, they ask questions about whether all three people are working at the same store location. If three people are not working at the same XYZ store location, the score is not affected.

See the examples beginning on the following page.

Examples

There are two IPS specialists in the vocational unit. Twelve people are employed at the businesses listed below:

Fairfield Senior Center
Fairfield Senior Center
Happy Burgers
Happy Burgers
Happy Burgers
Dave's Dog Walking Service
Fairfield Hospital
Vroom! Vroom! Auto Repair
AAA Bail Bondsmen
Security Bank
Ted's Tailoring
Educator's Supplies

Fairfield Senior Center is listed only twice, and reviewers therefore count the employer twice. Happy Burgers is listed three times; reviewers count two of the listings for this employer but not the third one (see below):

Fairfield Senior Center
Fairfield Senior Center
Happy Burgers
Happy Burgers
~~Happy Burgers~~
Dave's Dog Walking Service
Fairfield Hospital
Vroom! Vroom! Auto Repair
AAA Bail Bondsmen
Security Bank
Ted's Tailoring
Educator's Supplies

There are 12 total employers and 11 diverse employers. $11 \div 12 = .91$ (91%).
The score is 5.

There are two IPS specialists in the vocational unit. Only seven people are employed when fidelity reviewers visit the program. During the past six months, there were five additional job starts for a total of twelve employers (see below):

WGI Radio
Hilliard Department Store
Hilliard Department Store
Hilliard Department Store
Hilliard Department Store
Junior's Ice-skating Rink
Kennedy Elementary School
Bob's Diner
Red Barn Antiques
Classic Cars
Dillard's Drug Store
Bluebird Groceries

Hilliard Department Store is listed four times. Reviewers count two of the listings and cross out the last two listings of the store (see below):

WGI Radio
Hilliard Department Store
Hilliard Department Store
~~Hilliard Department Store~~
~~Hilliard Department Store~~
Junior's Ice-skating Rink
Kennedy Elementary School
Bob's Diner
Red Barn Antiques
Classic Cars
Dillard's Drug Store
Bluebird Groceries

There are 10 diverse employers and 12 total employers. $10 \div 12 = .83$ (83%).
The score is 4.

To calculate the score for this item:

Determine the number of total employers and the number of diverse employers (the same employer no more than twice) where IPS clients work. Divide the number of diverse employers by the total number of employers. Score using the 1-5 anchors as appropriate.

10. Competitive Jobs

Employment specialists provide competitive job options that have permanent status rather than temporary or time-limited status, e.g., TE (transitional employment positions). Competitive jobs pay at least minimum wage, are jobs that anyone can apply for and are not set aside for people with disabilities. (Seasonal jobs and jobs from temporary agencies that other community members use are counted as competitive jobs.)

Possible sources of information for this item include:

- Data from the IPS supervisor
- Client record reviews
- Observation of the vocational unit meeting
- IPS specialist interviews
- Observation of IPS specialists meeting with employers
- Interviews with clients and family members
- Interviews with state Vocational Rehabilitation counselors

Rationale: People say that they are interested in regular jobs rather than positions that are set aside for those who have disabilities. In this way people are part of their communities and do not feel the effects of stigma from mental illness.

Reviewers ask for a list of job types and businesses where people are working. If there are fewer than 10 working people, they ask to see a list of job starts for the past six months so that there will be enough jobs to determine what percent of jobs are competitive. Reviewers should not include jobs that people obtained prior to entering IPS. **If the number of examples in the past six months is less than 10 for a staff of at least two specialists (or fewer than five for a single specialist), reviewers listen for examples of types of jobs that IPS specialists are helping clients apply for during the vocational unit meeting and they note examples that are documented in client records.** If all evidence points to the fact that IPS specialists are helping people to find competitive jobs the program would receive a score of 5.

Self-employment is competitive employment. To distinguish self-employment from casual labor, which is not competitive employment, reviewers ask if the person reports her income to the government and files taxes for her business. If self-employed people report that they are unhappy with their work hours or wages, reviewers make a comment under the item **Individualized Job Search**.

Peer specialist positions are competitive positions. While it is true that the positions are set aside for people with lived experience of mental illness, one of the qualifications for the job is having the lived experience of mental illness.

If some people are working for temporary staffing agencies (i.e., agencies that negotiate temporary jobs with area businesses), reviewers ask why those jobs were selected. Some people choose seasonal work because they want jobs such as construction or landscaping, which is consistent with competitive jobs. Other people work in positions that begin as temporary in status and transition to permanent jobs. If all workers in those positions, regardless of disability status, begin as temporary workers then the jobs are competitive. For example, if new workers at a factory are only hired through a temporary agency and then permanently hired at the factory after 90 days, those positions are competitive. When more than a few people have temporary jobs, reviewers question whether temporary jobs are based upon the workers' preferences.

When people are in volunteer jobs, reviewers ask why they are not working in competitive positions. If IPS specialists suggest volunteer positions when they believe people need work experience prior to a competitive job, reviewers make a recommendation in the fidelity report that specialists help people search for competitive jobs soon after they enter the program. The number of people working in volunteer jobs may affect the score for this item.

Some jobs pay above minimum wage but are not competitive because they are set aside for people with disabilities and are organized into work crews. An example is a cleaning crew that hires people with disabilities. Another example is a person working on a time-limited basis in a program that helps people gain work experience, such as cleaning a medical center for six months. In this case, job duration is based upon rules of the rehabilitation program rather than the employer.

To increase the hiring of people with disabilities, federal guidelines in the United States and in other countries require some employers (e.g., federal contractors) to take affirmative action to hire a percentage of qualified people with disabilities. These are competitive jobs provided that the jobs meet the other qualifications for competitive work (i.e., payment is minimum wage or above as others are paid carrying out the same job duties, the employer pays the employee directly rather than through a rehabilitation program).

Disability policies in some countries provide for time-limited subsidies to employers to pay the wages of workers with disabilities. At the end of the subsidized work period, the employer is not obliged to hire the employee permanently. Because of this, such jobs are not considered permanent competitive jobs.

Examples

Eleven people are employed. Nine jobs are competitive and two are volunteer positions. 9 (competitive jobs) divided by 11 (all jobs) = and $.82$ (82%). The score is 3.

There is one employment specialist in an IPS program that started six months ago. Three people are employed and two others started jobs within the past six months. Four people are employed in competitive jobs and one is working in a sheltered workshop that primarily employs people with disabilities. Four (competitive jobs) divided by 5 (all jobs) = .8 (80%). The score is 3.

Sample questions for IPS specialists

I noticed that a few people are working at temporary agencies. Can you tell me about the person at Ready Labor? Why did he choose that job? How about the person working at ...?

I noticed that someone is cleaning at a company called Abilities. Is that a job that anyone can apply for?

Sue is volunteering. Please tell me about that.

What is a competitive job?

Sample questions for IPS peer specialists

What is a competitive job? What other types of jobs are people working? Do you ever suggest jobs that are not competitive?

I noticed that someone is cleaning at a company called Abilities. Is that a job that anyone can apply for?

Sample questions for clients

Why did you choose a volunteer job? Would you have preferred to work at a paying job? Did anyone offer you help with a paying job?

How do you like your job at the temporary agency? Is that the type of work that you were hoping for?

For those of you who have a job now, is it a time-limited position or can you keep it as long as your employer is satisfied with your work?

Has anyone asked you about your long-term career goals?

To calculate the score for this item:

Determine the number of competitive jobs of IPS clients. Divide the number of competitive jobs by the number of IPS clients employed (whether currently or during the past six months). Score using the 1-5 anchors as appropriate.

11. Individualized Follow-along Supports

Clients receive different types of support for working a job that are based on the job, client preferences, work history, needs, etc. Supports are provided by a variety of people, including treatment team members (e.g., medication changes, social skills training, encouragement), family, friends, co-workers (i.e., natural supports), and employment specialist. Employment specialist also provides employer support (e.g., educational information, job accommodations) at client's request. Employment specialist offers help with career development, i.e., assistance with education, a more desirable job, or more preferred job duties.

Possible sources of information for this item include:

- Observation of the vocational unit meeting
- Client interviews
- Client record reviews
- Observation of the mental health treatment team meeting(s)
- IPS specialist interviews
- IPS peer specialist interviews
- State Vocational Rehabilitation counselor interviews
- Family member interviews
- IPS supervisor interview

Rationale: Helping people succeed at jobs and in educational/training programs is as important as helping them find employment. Supports are individualized because different workers have different needs and preferences related to working a job and going to school.

While reading client records, reviewers note the types of job and educational supports provided. While interviewing clients, IPS specialists, IPS peer specialists, mental health practitioners, family members, and state Vocational Rehabilitation counselors listen to what supports are offered to working people and students. They ask why different supports were selected for different people. Reviewers also hear about job supports while observing the vocational unit meeting and mental health treatment team meetings.

Job supports are related to the person's work history, preferences, strengths, symptoms, supports, and other factors. For example, if a person has difficulty getting up in the morning an IPS specialist may provide wake-up calls, help the person obtain an alarm clock, discuss whether a friend or family member can help wake him, or help him find a wake-up call service to purchase. Examples of other supports include meeting to talk about the job, helping someone report benefits, meeting with a benefits counselor to discuss a change in income, helping to ask for a job promotion, facilitating family meetings, meeting with a worker and his supervisor to discuss his work performance, observing someone at work to develop strategies for efficiency, providing rides to work

in order to help someone with anxiety, travel training to the job, coordinating services with the state Vocational Rehabilitation counselor, helping a worker understand orientation materials, etc. Mental health treatment team supports may include medication adjustments, budgeting, social skills training, encouragement for working a job, etc.

Educational supports are related to each person's preferences, education history, strengths related to schooling, issues related to a disability, etc. Examples of supports include meeting with teachers and family members to develop a plan to finish high school, helping people learn about educational programs in their area, meeting with school advisors, applying for financial aid, helping students develop study plans, providing information about time management techniques, requesting accommodations in the classroom or for taking tests, etc.

Written job/educational support plans are required for scores of 3 or higher. Job support plans include an outline of job supports that the IPS specialist provides, as well as steps that the worker will take in order to succeed on the job or at school. Optimally, plans also include supports from mental health practitioners, state Vocational Rehabilitation counselors, and family members.

Some IPS specialists write a job support plan while developing the job search plan. If the plan is not updated to include factors related to the position and the person's current situation when the person is offered a job, reviewers do not score higher than 3.

Assistance with career development and education is part of IPS supported employment services. Career development can include help with education or training related to a career, assistance asking for a promotion, or help finding a job that is more desirable than the person's current position. Reviewers find examples of career development to rate 5.

Reviewers note indicators that supports are not individualized. For example, if 70% of workers receive on-the-job coaching (IPS specialist provides job training while the person is working) or if almost everyone is visited at their workplaces, then supports are not individualized. Employment specialists should be able to give examples of individualized supports such as, "The last time he worked, he lost his job on the first day. Even though his first day of this new job was on a Saturday I made plans with my supervisor to work that day." Follow-along plans are specific to each person's strengths and needs.

Examples

IPS specialists are unable to share examples of how mental health practitioners have provided job or educational supports. Reviewers observe a mental health treatment team meeting in which the IPS specialist announces that a person has been hired. The team members do not discuss possible supports. Clients report that they receive supports for school and work from the IPS specialists only. Reviewers do not score higher than 3.

Most job supports are by phone. IPS specialists tell workers to “call if there is a problem” rather than scheduling meetings. Reviewers do not score higher than 2.

About half of the working people receive phone supports. IPS specialists tell workers to call if they have a problem. When specialists use this approach for less than half of the working people, reviewers do not score higher than 3.

Reviewers hear and read about situations in which people had difficulties with a job but the assigned specialist did not offer to change or intensify supports. They do not rate higher than 3 because the supports are not individualized.

Most workers decline follow-along supports. Reviewers ask how specialists make job supports convenient to people and learn that specialists do not offer to meet working people in convenient locations or at times of their choosing. They do not tell workers what they can offer to help them succeed. Reviewers do not score higher than 2. (Note: In programs serving young people, it is more common for workers to decline jobs supports at least initially.)

Experienced IPS specialists are able to provide examples of helping people leave jobs to find more desirable positions. Two people on the IPS team are helped with school supports. Reviewers score 5. If there were no examples of helping people with career development, reviewers would score 4.

Sample questions for clients

How does your employment specialist help you with your job? Is that the kind of help that you need or want?

How does your case manager/service coordinator or therapist help you with your job?

Has anyone offered to help you with your long-term career goals?

How did your IPS specialist help you select your education/technical training program? What supports did he provide while you were in school or training?

Have you ever had a problem with your job? How did your employment specialist help?

Sample questions for IPS specialists

Has anyone on your caseload started a job within the past month? How often do you meet him? What other types of supports have you offered? Did you talk to the mental health treatment team for their suggestions about job supports? What supports has the mental health treatment team provided?

What percent of working people uses job supports?

How do you decide what type of job supports to offer?

Do you ask for help from the medication prescriber when someone is having problems with symptoms or side effects on the job?

Is anyone on your caseload going to school? How are you helping?

Have you ever helped someone quit a job to find a better job? What is an example?

Have you ever helped someone ask for a promotion or transfer to a more desirable position within his or her company?

Questions for IPS peer specialists

Do you provide job supports? What type of supports? Are you providing job supports for anyone now?

Do you provide educational supports? What type of supports?

Do you encourage people to consider career support plans?

Do mental health practitioners suggest job or educational supports for individuals?

Questions for family members

What type of job or educational supports has the IPS specialist provided to your family member? Are those the right supports? Why or why not?

Questions for state Vocational Rehabilitation counselors

What types of job supports do IPS specialists provide to working people? Can you provide a recent example of supports provided to someone who is working?

Do you believe that the supports are individualized to each person's preferences and needs?

Do you help develop job support plans?

To calculate the score for this item:

Determine the different types of supports clients receive throughout the employment process. Score using the 1-5 anchors as appropriate.

12. Time-unlimited Follow-along Supports

Employment specialists have 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 clients. Clients are transitioned to step down job supports from a mental health worker following steady employment. Employment specialists contact clients within 3 days of learning about the job loss.

Possible sources of information for this item include:

- Client interviews
- Client record reviews
- Observation of the vocational unit meeting
- IPS specialist interviews
- IPS peer specialist interviews
- State Vocational Rehabilitation counselor interviews
- Family member interviews
- IPS supervisor interview

Rationale: There is some evidence that job loss is most likely to occur soon after a job start. Therefore, practitioners are encouraged to offer more supports to people who have just become employed. After people work steadily for a long period (on average, about a year) and report that they are satisfied with their jobs, they may no longer want and need job supports from the IPS team. In these situations mental health practitioners provide job supports.

When IPS specialists do not document the job supports they provide, reviewers do not score higher than 3. Some specialists document each interaction in a progress note while others use a weekly summary to record the services they provide.

Reviewers read at least five charts for people who have started jobs within the past six months to determine which supports are provided at the start of a job. They talk with working people about the supports they receive and they speak to IPS specialists and the supervisor about job supports.

IPS services are individualized and based on client preferences so there will be some variation about how often people meet with IPS specialists once they are employed.

Reviewers look for in-person supports offered just prior to the job start and after the job start. They count the number of weekly meetings with an IPS specialist during the worker's first month on the job.

Reviewers talk to IPS specialists and the IPS supervisor to learn whether the program has protocol regarding supports during the first month of the job. If there is no protocol, good fidelity is demonstrated when charts and interviews indicate that there are frequent, in-person meetings before the job start, just after the job start, and weekly for the first month.

People are transferred off the IPS team when they like their jobs and no longer feel that they need IPS services. Most people receive job supports from an IPS specialist for about a year.

Examples

Workers are almost always transferred off the IPS team as they reach a one-year anniversary on their jobs. Reviewers ask about the rationale that was used in individual cases and it appears that the program automatically closes cases at that point. Reviewers do not score higher than 4 because the duration of job supports is not individualized.

A team of IPS specialists that serves young adults transfers most working people off the IPS team earlier than one year. Specialists explain that they encourage working people to continue meeting with them, but many young people do not believe that supports are necessary. They add that some people who lose jobs ask for longer supports for the next job. Mental health practitioners also encourage workers to consider how job supports may be helpful. Reviewers do not lower the score for this item because the shorter duration of job supports is based on client choice.

After 90 days employment, most working people receive phone call supports. Reviewers do not score higher than 2.

Sample questions for IPS specialists

Please tell me about the last couple of people who obtained jobs. How long after they started the job did you have a face-to-face meeting? How did you support that person over the first month of work? Did anyone else provide supports?

Tell me about the last few working people who were transferred off the IPS team. How long had they been working? Why was it the right time for a transfer? Was each person included in the decision?

How do you know when it is the right time for someone to transfer off the IPS team?

Sample questions for IPS peer specialists

Please tell me about someone who was offered a job within the past couple of months. What types of supports has that person received?

Please tell me about a working person who was recently transferred off the IPS team. Why was he transferred? How long had he been working? Was it the right time for him to discontinue IPS services?

Sample questions for clients

When did you start your job?

How often do you meet with the employment specialist?

Do you meet in person or by phone?

To calculate the score for this item:

Determine the frequency with which the IPS specialists meet face-to-face with clients. Score using the 1-5 anchors as appropriate.

13. Community-based Services

Employment services such as engagement, job finding and follow-along supports are provided in natural community settings by all employment specialists. (Rate each employment specialist based upon their total weekly scheduled work hours, then calculate the average and use the closest scale point.)

Possible sources of information for this item include:

- Client interviews
- Client record reviews
- Family member interviews
- IPS specialist interviews
- IPS specialist's appointment book reviews
- Mental health practitioner interviews

Rationale: Research has demonstrated that IPS specialists who carry out their job responsibilities away from their offices help more people with employment.

Reviewers find information for scoring this item from a variety of sources. When agencies have cars for specialists to use, reviewers may ask to look at sign-out logs as

one source of information about how much time specialists spend in the community. Reviewers take notes while reviewing client records to learn how frequently client meetings take place in community settings. They also ask specialists to bring their appointment books and review a few work days, hour by hour, asking for locations for each activity. An example of this interview is included in the IPS Supported Employment Fidelity Kit DVD. As a practice exercise, reviewers take notes in order to later determine how much time the specialist spent in the community.

Review recent work schedules. Reviewers find the average amount of time that each specialist spends away from his office and average those to find the score. For example, one specialist is out of her office 50% of the time, another is out 55% of the time, and the third is out 65% of his time. $50 + 55 + 65 = 170$. 170 divided by $3 = 56.6$. The score is 4.

A common misconception about this item is that for good fidelity, 65% of client meetings are in the community. Actually, for good fidelity, IPS specialists spend at least 65% of their *total work hours* away from their offices. Specialists who work 40 hours per week spend between 5 and 5.5 hours per day in the community. For part-time IPS specialists, the amount of time in the community is pro-rated. For example, a specialist who works 20 hours per week should spend 65% of 20 hours each week in the community (13 hours).

Examples of community locations include state Vocational Rehabilitation offices, businesses, libraries (to submit online applications), schools and colleges, coffee shops, people's homes, a monthly meeting of job developers in the area, and time spent traveling to different locations. When offering to meet in public places, IPS specialists ask clients if they are comfortable meeting in those locations.

Occasionally, supervisors move vocational unit meetings and individual supervision into community locations to increase the percent of time spent in the community. This practice is not consistent with the intent of item **Community-based Services**. Other examples that would not count as time in the community are meetings at the agency's satellite offices and completing agency documentation away from the agency.

When agencies operate client housing that includes staff offices in the apartment buildings, time spent meeting with clients in offices or meeting rooms at the housing program is not counted towards community time.

Example

Reviewers interview four IPS specialists with their appointment books. For the days reviewed, the specialists spent 50%, 56%, 67%, and 70% of their time away from their offices. The average amount of time spent in the community was 60%. Client records indicated that 72% of client meetings were in community locations, which supports the schedule reviews. Reviewers score 4 for this item.

Sample questions for IPS specialists

Thanks for bringing your appointment book. I was hoping to get a better understanding of your job. Please show me what you did last week. What time did you start work on Monday? Where did you meet the person to start the career profile? What did you do next? What did you do on Tuesday?

Do some people prefer to meet with you at the office? Is that common? How do you spend the time in the office?

Sample question for IPS supervisor

What strategies has the team used to increase time in the community?

What do you do to help specialists if you are concerned they are in the office too much?

Sample questions for clients

Where do you usually meet with your employment specialist?

Where do you prefer to meet with your employment specialist?

Sample question for family members

Where does the specialist usually meet with your family member?

Sample question for mental health practitioners

Where do you usually find the IPS specialist when you need him?

To calculate the score for this item:

Determine the percentage of scheduled work hours that each IPS specialist spends in the community. Add the percentages for all IPS specialists and divide by the number of specialists. Score using the 1-5 anchors as appropriate.

14. Assertive Engagement and Outreach by Integrated Treatment Team

Service termination is not based on missed appointments or fixed time limits. Systematic documentation of outreach attempts. Engagement and outreach attempts made by integrated team members. Multiple home/community visits. Coordinated visits by employment specialist with integrated team member. Connect with family, when applicable. Once it is clear that the client no longer wants to work or continue with SE services, the team stops outreach.

Possible sources of information for this item include:

- Client interviews
- Client record reviews (for people who stopped attending appointments and/or were closed from services)
- Observation of the vocational unit meeting
- Observation of the mental health treatment team meeting(s)
- IPS specialist interviews
- IPS peer specialist interviews
- Family member interviews
- IPS supervisor interview

Rationale: The reasons people stop attending IPS appointments vary. One person may have trouble remembering appointments while another is nervous about working. Problems with babysitters, limited options for transportation, concern about losing benefits, or low expectations for employment services can also result in missed meetings. In order to help people overcome these issues, IPS specialists attempt to meet in person to learn about the problem. They work with the mental health treatment team practitioners and family members (with permission) to make services accessible to the person.

If someone says that he no longer wants to work, the IPS specialist may close the case, though the mental health practitioner should be encouraged to discuss work with him occasionally.

Reviewers ask specialists to talk about a couple of people who have disengaged from the program. They ask IPS specialists to describe the strategies they have used to re-engage those individuals.

Reviewers ask to read at least two client records for people who left the IPS program without a job. They read progress notes for the last few months of IPS services to learn if the IPS specialist provided outreach, and what types of attempts were made to re-engage the person in services.

Reviewers ask for a list of people who have not been seen in 30 days, including at least two people who are unemployed. They ask about the team’s efforts to connect with those people.

A “coordinated visit with integrated team member” indicates that practitioners are coordinating visits and does not necessarily mean that they are both present for the client meeting. For example, a case manager may tell the IPS specialist that she is seeing a person at 2:00 PM and the employment specialist is likely to be able to find the person in the waiting room beforehand. It may also mean that the IPS specialist and case manager go together to meet with a client.

When agency policies permit practitioners to text clients, reviewers count texting as one type of outreach attempt.

Full implementation of this item requires six strategies:

1. Service termination is not based on missed appointments or fixed time limits
2. Systematic documentation of outreach attempts
3. Engagement and outreach attempts made by integrated team members
4. Multiple home/community visits
5. Coordinated visits by employment specialist with integrated team member
6. Connect with family, when applicable

After two months of unsuccessful (and varied) attempts to re-engage a person, the IPS specialist may close the person’s case without negative effects on the score for **Assertive Engagement and Outreach by Integrated Treatment Team**.

Examples

Some IPS specialists report that when a person misses appointments they make a few phone calls, send a letter, and then close the person’s case. They document their outreach attempts. Reviewers score 2.

IPS specialists report they use five of the six outreach strategies, but they have not connected with families because they do not have client permission. Reviewers score 4. In the fidelity report, reviewers recommend different ways that specialists can broadly define family and how they can ask about family involvement.

Reviewers learn that specialists use all six types of outreach attempts and also talk to the mental health treatment team members to try to learn how to connect with people who miss appointments. After a few months of unsuccessful attempts, the specialist closes the person’s case. Reviewers rate 5.

Sample questions for IPS specialists

What do you do when someone begins missing appointments (or misses the first appointment)? Can you give me an example of someone who has not been consistent in keeping appointments with you?

At what point do you close the person's case?

Do you document your efforts to reach people who miss appointments?

Have you ever contacted a family member to learn why someone was missing appointments or to ask how to re-connect with the person?

Sample questions for IPS peer specialists

What do you do when someone misses appointments with you?

When would someone's IPS case be closed due to missed appointments?

Sample questions for IPS supervisor

Does the program have a policy about missed appointments?

At what point should specialists close a person's case if he has been missing appointments?

Sample questions for mental health practitioners

If a person misses appointments with the IPS specialist, what do you do?

How do you help people connect to the IPS specialist for the first time?

To calculate the score for this item:

Of the six identified strategies for engagement and outreach, determine the number present at the time of review. Score using the 1-5 anchors as appropriate.

GLOSSARY

Agency intake: As part of the intake process, many agencies use a form to record background information when a person begins receiving services. At some agencies, the intake, or assessment, is updated annually.

Assertive community treatment (ACT): A team approach with shared caseloads, frequent staff meetings, intensive community-based services, and a focus on assistance with daily living skills. ACT teams provide comprehensive, community-based psychiatric treatment, rehabilitation, and support to persons with serious mental illness. Services include case management, initial and ongoing assessments, psychiatric services, employment and housing assistance, family support and education, substance abuse services, and other services and supports critical to an individual's ability to live successfully in the community.

Benefits planning: Refers to helping a person review all of his or her benefits (e.g. Social Security benefits/disability benefits, medical benefits, food stamps, housing subsidies, Veterans Administration benefits, etc.) to determine the impact of earned income upon those benefits. Also called work incentives planning.

Case manager (or care manager): Person who assesses which services people may need and refers them for assistance. This person may also provide help directly with housing, family intervention and other needs.

Career profile: A document (formerly called a vocational profile) in which the employment specialist records work preferences, work history, education history, strengths, legal history and other information pertinent to a person's employment and education goals.

Co-occurring disorders: Sometimes referred to as "dual diagnosis." Coexisting serious mental illness and substance abuse disorder.

Competitive employment: Part-time and full-time jobs that anyone can apply for rather than jobs set aside for people with disabilities, except when following federal guidelines to take affirmative action to hire a percentage of qualified people with disabilities. Competitive jobs pay at least minimum wage and people receive the same pay as others receive performing the same work. Employees in the work setting do not consist exclusively of people with disabilities. The jobs do not have artificial time limits imposed by the social service agency. Wages are paid directly from the employer to the employee.

Disclosure: Refers to disclosing information about one's disability (or other personal information) in the workplace. Some people choose to share information about a disability in order to ask for accommodations (such as the support from an IPS specialist) or because they are proud of having overcome barriers in order to return to work. Other people do not disclose a disability because they are concerned about stigma or do not believe that their disability is pertinent to working a job.

Enclaves: Also referred to as work crews. Typically refers to a group of people with disabilities who work under the supervision of an employee of a vocational rehabilitation program. These jobs are not competitive even when the work is performed in community settings or when the wages are at or above minimum wage.

Evidence-based practice: Refers to a well-defined practice that has been validated by rigorous research with different investigators. The practice has been shown to be effective, safe and cost-effective. The practice has guidelines that describe the critical components.

Fidelity scale: A fidelity scale is a tool to measure the level of implementation of an evidence-based practice (EBP). The Supported Employment Fidelity Scale defines the critical elements of IPS supported employment in order to differentiate between programs that follow the approach from those that do not use the evidence-based practice.

Fidelity action plan: A written plan that outlines steps to improve fidelity to the IPS supported employment approach. Plans include specific steps to be taken, person(s) responsible, and estimated dates of completion.

Field mentoring: Support and training to practitioners as they perform their work. For instance, a supervisor meets with a practitioner and client who are working on the career profile to model or observe the practitioner's listening skills. IPS supported employment supervisors also go with employment specialists to demonstrate employer relationship building, observe specialists making employer contacts and provide feedback.

First episode psychosis programs: Teams of mental health and IPS practitioners who provide intensive support to young people who are experiencing psychosis for the first time. Mental health practitioners provide education about psychosis and its treatment as IPS practitioners assist with education and employment. Peer recovery specialists are sometimes part of the teams.

IPS specialist: The position also known as employment specialist, job specialist, or employment and education specialist.

Job readiness groups: These groups vary in content but typically focus on teaching people about the world of work; the importance of punctuality, proper grooming, managing symptoms in relationship to a job, etc. Groups that precede a job search are not part of IPS supported employment and are not correlated with good employment outcomes.

Mental health treatment team (or multidisciplinary team): A group of mental health practitioners such as counselors, case managers, service coordinators, nurses, substance abuse counselors, medication prescribers, peer specialists, or others. May also include employment specialists, state Vocational Rehabilitation counselors, housing specialists or others.

Minimum wage: Laws in the United States regulate the minimum, hourly wage that employers pay workers.

Piece-rate wage: A small number of employers in the United States are exempt from paying minimum wage and pay workers based on units of work performed instead.

Primary worker: Similar to care coordinator, service coordinator, or case manager. This position makes referrals and coordinates, housing services, mental health treatment, and other social services.

Rehabilitation agency: An agency or center that provides employment services and possibly other types of non-treatment services such as social activities or housing assistance.

Service coordinator: Position to assess what services people need or want and refer them for assistance. May also provide help directly with housing, family intervention and other areas. Similar to care coordinator or case manager.

Sheltered employment: Sheltered workshops hire people with disabilities to complete contracts for other businesses. For example, people with disabilities may be paid a piece-rate wage to assemble garden hose spigots for a company that makes garden hoses. Sheltered workshops are not consistent with IPS supported employment.

Situational assessments: Short-term work assignments to evaluate work behaviors such as attendance, ability to persist at task, social skills and so forth. These assessments may

also evaluate the person's ability to perform a particular type of work. Situational assessments are not consistent with IPS supported employment.

Steering committees: Sometimes referred to as advisory committees or leadership teams. A group of stakeholders for IPS supported employment that meets to discuss implementation efforts and develop goals for better implementation and program sustainability. Steering committees typically include the IPS supervisor, clients, family members, state Vocational Rehabilitation counselors and supervisors, agency executive director, quality assurance director, clinical director or other administrators, area chamber of commerce representatives, local college and high school equivalency program staff, etc.

Strengths-based approach: Practitioners focus on a person's skills, interests, experiences, and abilities working a job as well as their needs. Client situations are discussed in a respectful manner. Practitioners focus on what is most important for the client and conveys hope for reaching goals.

Temporary staffing agency: An agency that contracts with businesses to fill positions with qualified people on a short-term basis, and sometimes with an option for the business to hire people permanently.

Transition-age youth: People between the ages of 16 and 24 years who may be at risk of not completing school and may need support to transition to living and working independently. Programs for transition-age youth may include housing, assistance applying for welfare or disability benefits, counseling, and help with education and employment. Some programs serve only transition age youth who have disabilities and other programs serve a broad group of young people.

Vocational evaluation: Usually refers to a battery of tests and work samples that measure academic levels, manual dexterity, short and long-term recall, range of motion, vocational interests, ability to sort items, etc. Vocational evaluation is not consistent with IPS supported employment.

Vocational profile: The document referred to as the career profile. See above.

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR): Each state, as well as the District of Columbia and US Territories, supports a division of Vocational Rehabilitation that has offices throughout the state to provide vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with disabilities. Vocational Rehabilitation counselors help people find gainful employment related to each person's "strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capacities, interests, and

informed choice.” Vocational Rehabilitation counselors work collaboratively with IPS programs. They provide expertise about disabilities and jobs, and sometimes help with costs related to work clothing, transportation, or education when those are related to the person’s employment goal.

Vocational unit: IPS specialists and their supervisor form the IPS team. They participate in group supervision to discuss client situations related to school and work goals, develop strength-based recommendations and share employer contacts. They provide back up and support for each other.

Work incentives: Special rules that make it possible for people with disabilities receiving Social Security or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) to work and still receive monthly payments and Medicare or Medicaid. For more information go to www.socialsecurity.gov and search for Red Book.

FIDELITY TOOLS

As fidelity tools are updated, the new versions are available at
www.DartmouthIPS.org.

Reviewer's Checklist for Fidelity Visits

- Paper and pens
- IPS Supported Employment Fidelity Scale
- Sample interview questions
- The IPS Supported Employment Fidelity Guide, updated 2015
- Client record review forms
- Data sent by IPS supervisor in advance of the fidelity visit

Sample Letter Regarding Preparation for the Fidelity Visit

December 10, 20XX

Fatima Pacis
 IPS Supervisor
 X Center
 Street
 Town, City, Zip

Dear Fatima,

Thank you for your help with the fidelity visit. This letter is to help you prepare a schedule for the visit, and also includes a list of documents that we need to complete the review. Nick Germanotta and I look forward to seeing you on January 15 and 16.

During the visit, we will need to review the documents listed below. Please tell us if you do not have any of the documents because it is possible that you have the information in another form that we can use.

- List of businesses where clients are currently working, including job titles, job start dates, and names of businesses. If fewer than 10 people are employed, please include a list of job starts for the past six months. Please include all types of positions including internships, volunteer jobs, etc.
- Employment specialist and IPS supervisor position vacancies for the last six months.
- Brochures (or program descriptions) for each employment service available to agency clients.
- Copies of job development logs for the past two months for each employment specialist.
- The IPS fidelity action plan or program implementation plan.
- Field mentoring logs for employer relationship building for each specialist (two months).
- The most recent quality assurance report (or section of the report pertaining to IPS supported employment).
- Minutes from the IPS steering committee or leadership committee.
- Caseload lists for each employment specialist. Please note the mental health treatment team assignment for each person on the list.

There are specific activities that we need to complete during our visit so that we can score the fidelity scale. Please send a draft agenda to us at least two weeks before the visit. Below is a sample agenda.

DAY ONE

Activity	Time	Reviewers
Orientation to the agency. (Often provided by the IPS supported employment supervisor and may include others.)	8:30 AM	Both reviewers
Observation of an IPS supported employment unit meeting.	9:00	Both reviewers
Observation of mental health treatment team	10:00	One reviewer (the other will

meeting for Team A		read client records)
Interview with the agency executive director, quality assurance director and clinical director.	11:15	Both reviewers
Meeting with a psychiatrist, medication prescriber or medical director	11:45	Both reviewers
Lunch	Noon	Both reviewers
Individually interview at least three case managers (different people than the last review).	12:30 PM	Reviewers will separate and interview each case manager for about 20 minutes.
Observe at least two employment specialists as they meet with employers (job development)	1:15	Reviewers will separate and observe each IPS specialist during at least two employer contacts each.
Interview two employment specialists who were not shadowed while facilitation employer meetings.	2:45	Reviewers will separate and interview each case manager for about 30 minutes.
Interview a small group of clients (five to seven people) who have received IPS supported employment services.	3:15	One reviewer (while the other interviews family members—see below)
Interview one or two family members of people who have received IPS services.	3:15	See above
Interview a state Vocational Rehabilitation counselor and/or supervisor	4:00	One reviewer—the other will review client records.

DAY TWO

Interview the benefits planner	8:30	Both reviewers
Observe mental health treatment team meeting for Team B	9:00	One reviewer –the other review client records
Interview IPS supervisor	10:00	Both reviewers
Interview mental health team leader	10:45	Both reviewers
Finish reviewing client records	11:00	Both reviewers

Please have 15 client records available for review. Include records for the people we will interview, five records for people who are working or have had a job recently, and at least two records for people who stopped attending appointments. If people in the program are attending training or educational programs, please include records for two clients.

Fatima, thanks for your help with the fidelity visit. We realize that it is a lot of work but we want the report to be accurate so that more people can achieve their work goals. Please feel free to call if you have any questions about this letter.

Sincerely,

Ann Shapiro
 Department of Mental Health
 Ann.Shapiro@mh.state.us

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT FIDELITY SCALE*

1/7/08

Rater:

Site:

Date:

Total Score:

Directions: Circle one anchor number for each criterion.

Criterion

Data
Source**

Anchor

STAFFING

1. Caseload size: Employment specialists have individual employment caseloads. The maximum caseload for any full-time employment specialist is 20 or fewer clients.

MIS,
DOC, INT

- 1= Ratio of 41 or more clients per employment specialist.
- 2= Ratio of 31-40 clients per employment specialist.
- 3= Ratio of 26-30 clients per employment specialist.
- 4= Ratio of 21-25 clients per employment specialist.
- 5= Ratio of 20 or fewer clients per employment specialist.

2. Employment services staff: Employment specialists provide only employment services.

MIS, DOC
INT

- 1= Employment specialists provide employment services less than 60% of the time.
- 2= Employment specialists provide employment services 60 - 74% of the time.
- 3= Employment specialists provide employment services 75 - 89% of the time.
- 4= Employment specialists provide employment services 90 - 95% of the time.
- 5= Employment specialists provide employment services 96% or more of the time.

*Formerly called IPS Model Fidelity Scale

**See end of scale for key

3. Vocational generalists: Each employment specialist carries out all phases of employment service, including intake, engagement, assessment, job placement, job coaching, and follow-along supports before step down to less intensive employment support from another MH practitioner. (Note: It is not expected that each employment specialist will provide benefits counseling to their clients. Referrals to a highly trained benefits counselor are in keeping with high fidelity, see Item # 1 in “Services”.)

MIS, DOC,
INT, OBS

- 1= Employment specialist only provides vocational referral service to vendors and other programs.
- 2= Employment specialist maintains caseload but refers clients to other programs for vocational services.
- 3= Employment specialist provides one to four phases of the employment service (e.g. intake, engagement, assessment, job development, job placement, job coaching, and follow along supports).
- 4= Employment specialist provides five phases of employment service but not the entire service.
- 5= Employment specialist carries out all six phases of employment service (e.g. program intake, engagement, assessment, job development/job placement, job coaching, and follow-along supports).

ORGANIZATION

1. Integration of rehabilitation with mental health treatment thru team assignment: Employment specialists are part of up to 2 mental health treatment teams from which at least 90% of the employment specialist’s caseload is comprised.

MIS, DOC,
INT, OBS

- 1= Employment specialists are part of a vocational program that functions separately from the mental health treatment.
- 2= Employment specialists are attached to three or more mental health treatment teams. OR Clients are served by individual mental health practitioners who are not organized into teams. OR Employment specialists are attached to one or two teams from which less than 50% of the employment specialist’s caseload is comprised.
- 3= Employment specialists are attached to one or two mental health treatment teams, from which at least 50 - 74% of the employment specialist’s caseload is comprised.
- 4= Employment specialists are attached to one or two mental health treatment teams, from which at least 75 - 89% of the employment specialist’s caseload is comprised.
- 5= Employment specialists are attached to one or two mental health treatment teams, from which 90 - 100% of the employment specialist’s caseload is comprised.

2. Integration of rehabilitation with mental health treatment thru frequent team member contact:

MIS, DOC
INT, OBS

Employment specialists actively participate in weekly mental health treatment team meetings (not replaced by administrative meetings) that discuss individual clients and their employment goals with shared decision-making. Employment specialist's office is in close proximity to (or shared with) their mental health treatment team members. Documentation of mental health treatment and employment services are integrated in a single client chart. Employment specialists help the team think about employment for people who haven't yet been referred to supported employment services.

1= One or none is present.

2= Two are present

3= Three are present.

4= Four are present.

5= Five are present.

All five key components are present.

- Employment specialist attends weekly mental health treatment team meetings.
- Employment specialist participates actively in treatment team meetings with shared decision-making.
- Employment services documentation (i.e., vocational assessment/profile, employment plan, progress notes) is integrated into client's mental health treatment record.
- Employment specialist's office is in close proximity to (or shared with) their mental health treatment team members.
- Employment specialist helps the team think about employment for people who haven't yet been referred to supported employment services.

3. Collaboration between employment specialists and Vocational Rehabilitation counselors: The employment specialists and VR counselors have frequent contact for the purpose of discussing shared clients and identifying potential referrals.

DOC, INT
OBS, ISP

1= Employment specialists and VR counselors have client-related contacts (phone, e-mail, in person) less than quarterly to discuss shared clients and referrals. OR Employment specialists and VR counselors do not communicate.

2= Employment specialists and VR counselors have client-related contacts (phone, e-mail, in person) at least quarterly to discuss shared clients and referrals.

3= Employment specialists and VR counselors have client-related contacts (phone, e-mail, in-person) monthly to discuss shared clients and referrals.

4= Employment specialists and VR counselors have scheduled, face-to-face

meetings at least quarterly, OR have client-related contacts (phone, e-mail, in person) weekly to discuss shared clients and referrals.

5= Employment specialists and VR counselors have scheduled, face-to-face meetings at least monthly and have client-related contacts (phone, e-mail, in person) weekly to discuss shared clients and referrals.

4. Vocational unit: At least 2 full-time employment specialists and a team leader comprise the employment unit. They have weekly client-based group supervision following the supported employment model in which strategies are identified and job leads are shared. They provide coverage for each other's caseload when needed. MIS, INT, OBS

1= Employment specialists are not part of a vocational unit.

2= Employment specialists have the same supervisor but do not meet as a group. They do not provide back-up services for each other's caseload.

3= Employment specialists have the same supervisor and discuss clients between each other on a weekly basis. They provide back-up services for each other's caseloads as needed. OR, If a program is in a rural area where employment specialists are geographically separate with one employment specialist at each site, the employment specialists meet 2-3 times monthly with their supervisor by teleconference.

4= At least 2 employment specialists and a team leader form an employment unit with 2-3 regularly scheduled meetings per month for client-based group supervision in which strategies are identified and job leads are shared and discuss clients between each other. They provide coverage for each other's caseloads when needed. OR, If a program is in a rural area where employment specialists are geographically separate with one employment specialist at each site, the employment specialists meet 2-3 times per month with their supervisor in person or by teleconference and mental health practitioners are available to help the employment specialist with activities such as taking someone to work or picking up job applications.

5= At least 2 full-time employment specialists and a team leader form an employment unit with weekly client-based group supervision based on the supported employment model in which strategies are identified and job leads are shared. They provide coverage for each other's caseloads when needed.

5. Role of employment supervisor: Supported employment unit is led by a supported employment team leader. Employment specialists' skills are developed and improved through outcome-based supervision. All five key roles of the employment supervisor are present.

MIS, INT,
DOC, OBS

1= One or none is present.

2= Two are present.

3= Three are present.

4= Four are present.

5= Five are present.

Five key roles of the employment supervisor:

- One full-time equivalent (FTE) supervisor is responsible for no more than 10 employment specialists. The supervisor does not have other supervisory responsibilities. (Program leaders supervising fewer than ten employment specialists may spend a percentage of time on other supervisory activities on a prorated basis. For example, an employment supervisor responsible for 4 employment specialists may be devoted to SE supervision half time.)
- Supervisor conducts weekly supported employment supervision designed to review client situations and identify new strategies and ideas to help clients in their work lives.
- Supervisor communicates with mental health treatment team leaders to ensure that services are integrated, to problem solve programmatic issues (such as referral process, or transfer of follow-along to mental health workers) and to be a champion for the value of work. Attends a meeting for each mental health treatment team on a quarterly basis.
- Supervisor accompanies employment specialists, who are new or having difficulty with job development, in the field monthly to improve skills by observing, modeling, and giving feedback on skills, e.g., meeting employers for job development.
- Supervisor reviews current client outcomes with employment specialists and sets goals to improve program performance at least quarterly.

6. Zero exclusion criteria: All clients interested in working have access to supported employment services regardless of job readiness factors, substance abuse, symptoms, history of violent behavior, cognition impairments, treatment non-adherence, and personal presentation. These apply during supported employment services too. Employment specialists offer to help with another job when one has ended, regardless of the reason that the job ended or number of jobs held. If VR has screening criteria, the mental health agency does not use them to exclude anybody. Clients are not screened out formally or informally.

DOC, INT
OBS

- 1= There is a formal policy to exclude clients due to lack of job readiness (e.g., substance abuse, history of violence, low level of functioning, etc.) by employment staff, case managers, or other practitioners.
- 2= Most clients are unable to access supported employment services due to perceived lack of job readiness (e.g., substance abuse, history of violence, low level of functioning, etc.).
- 3= Some clients are unable to access supported employment services due to perceived lack of job readiness (e.g., substance abuse, history of violence, low level of functioning, etc.).
- 4= No evidence of exclusion, formal or informal. Referrals are not solicited by a wide variety of sources. Employment specialists offer to help with another job when one has ended, regardless of the reason that the job ended or number of jobs held.
- 5= All clients interested in working have access to supported employment services. Mental health practitioners encourage clients to consider employment, and referrals for supported employment are solicited by many sources. Employment specialists offer to help with another job when one has ended, regardless of the reason that the job ended or number of jobs held.

7. Agency focus on competitive employment: Agency promotes competitive work through multiple strategies. Agency intake includes questions about interest in employment. Agency displays written postings (e.g., brochures, bulletin boards, posters) about employment and supported employment services. The focus should be with the agency programs that provide services to adults with severe mental illness. Agency supports ways for clients to share work stories with other clients and staff. Agency measures rate of competitive employment and shares this information with agency leadership and staff.

DOC, INT,
OBS

- 1= One or none is present.
- 2= Two are present.
- 3= Three are present.
- 4= Four are present.
- 5= Five are present.

Agency promotes competitive work through multiple strategies:

- Agency intake includes questions about interest in employment.
- Agency includes questions about interest in employment on all annual (or semi-annual) assessment or treatment plan reviews.

8. Executive team support for SE: Agency executive team members (e.g., CEO/Executive Director, Chief Operating Officer, QA Director, Chief Financial Officer, Clinical Director, Medical Director, Human Resource Director) assist with supported employment implementation and sustainability. All five key components of executive team support are present. DOC, INT, OBS

- Agency displays written postings (e.g., brochures, bulletin boards, posters) about working and supported employment services, in lobby and other waiting areas.
- Agency supports ways for clients to share work stories with other clients and staff (e.g., agency-wide employment recognition events, in-service training, peer support groups, agency newsletter articles, invited speakers at client treatment groups, etc.) at least twice a year.
- Agency measures rate of competitive employment on at least a quarterly basis and shares outcomes with agency leadership and staff.

1= One is present.

2= Two are present.

3= Three are present.

4= Four are present.

5= Five are present.

- Executive Director and Clinical Director demonstrate knowledge regarding the principles of evidence-based supported employment.
- Agency QA process includes an explicit review of the SE program, or components of the program, at least every 6 months through the use of the Supported Employment Fidelity Scale or until achieving high fidelity, and at least yearly thereafter. Agency QA process uses the results of the fidelity assessment to improve SE implementation and sustainability.
- At least one member of the executive team actively participates at SE leadership team meetings (steering committee meetings) that occur at least every six months for high fidelity programs and at least quarterly for programs that have not yet achieved high fidelity. Steering committee is defined as a diverse group of stakeholders charged with reviewing fidelity, program implementation, and the service delivery system. Committee develops written action plans aimed at developing or sustaining high fidelity services.

- The agency CEO/Executive Director communicates how SE services support the mission of the agency and articulates clear and specific goals for SE and/or competitive employment to all agency staff during the first six months and at least annually (i.e., SE kickoff, all-agency meetings, agency newsletters, etc.). This item is not delegated to another administrator.
- SE program leader shares information about EBP barriers and facilitators with the executive team (including the CEO) at least twice each year. The executive team helps the program leader identify and implement solutions to barriers.

SERVICES

1. Work incentives planning: All clients are offered assistance in obtaining comprehensive, individualized work incentives planning before starting a new job and assistance accessing work incentives planning thereafter when making decisions about changes in work hours and pay. Work incentives planning includes SSA benefits, medical benefits, medication subsidies, housing subsidies, food stamps, spouse and dependent children benefits, past job retirement benefits and any other source of income. Clients are provided information and assistance about reporting earnings to SSA, housing programs, VA programs, etc., depending on the person's benefits.

- DOC, INT
OBS, ISP
- 1= Work incentives planning is not readily available or easily accessible to most clients served by the agency.
 - 2= Employment specialist gives client contact information about where to access information about work incentives planning.
 - 3= Employment specialist discusses with each client changes in benefits based on work status.
 - 4= Employment specialist or other MH practitioner offer clients assistance in obtaining comprehensive, individualized work incentives planning by a person trained in work incentives planning prior to client starting a job.
 - 5= Employment specialist or other MH practitioner offer clients assistance in obtaining comprehensive, individualized work incentives planning by a specially trained work incentives planner prior to starting a job. They also facilitate access to work incentives planning when clients need to make decisions about changes in work hours and pay. Clients are provided information and assistance about reporting earnings to SSA, housing programs, etc., depending on the person's benefits.

2. Disclosure: Employment specialists provide clients with accurate information and assist with evaluating their choices to make an informed decision regarding what is revealed to the employer about having a disability.

DOC, INT
OBS

1= None is present.

2= One is present.

3= Two are present.

4= Three are present.

5= Four are present.

- Employment specialists do not require all clients to disclose their psychiatric disability at the work site in order to receive services.
- Employment specialists offer to discuss with clients the possible costs and benefits (pros and cons) of disclosure at the work site in advance of clients disclosing at the work site. Employment specialists describe how disclosure relates to requesting accommodations and the employment specialist's role communicating with the employer.
- Employment specialists discuss specific information to be disclosed (e.g., disclose receiving mental health treatment, or presence of a psychiatric disability, or difficulty with anxiety, or unemployed for a period of time, etc.) and offers examples of what could be said to employers.
- Employment specialists discuss disclosure on more than one occasion (e.g., if clients have not found employment after two months or if clients report difficulties on the job.)

3. Ongoing, work-based vocational assessment: Initial vocational assessment occurs over 2-3 sessions and is updated with information from work experiences in competitive jobs. A vocational profile form that includes information about preferences, experiences, skills, current adjustment, strengths, personal contacts, etc, is updated with each new job experience. Aims at problem solving using environmental assessments and consideration of reasonable accommodations. Sources of information include the client, treatment team, clinical records, and with

DOC, INT,
OBS, ISP

1= Vocational evaluation is conducted prior to job placement with emphasis on office-based assessments, standardized tests, intelligence tests, work samples.

2= Vocational assessment may occur through a stepwise approach that includes: prevocational work experiences (e.g., work units in a day program), volunteer jobs, or set aside jobs (e.g., NISH jobs agency-run businesses, sheltered workshop jobs, affirmative businesses, enclaves).

3= Employment specialists assist clients in finding competitive jobs directly without systematically reviewing interests, experiences, strengths,

the client's permission, from family members and previous employers.

etc. and do not routinely analyze job loss (or job problems) for lessons learned.

- 4= Initial vocational assessment occurs over 2-3 sessions in which interests and strengths are explored. Employment specialists help clients learn from each job experience and also work with the treatment team to analyze job loss, job problems and job successes. They do not document these lessons learned in the vocational profile, OR The vocational profile is not updated on a regular basis.
- 5= 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. The vocational profile form is used to identify job types and work environments. It is updated with each new job experience. Aims at problem solving using environmental assessments and consideration of reasonable accommodations. Sources of information include the client, treatment team, clinical records, and with the client's permission, from family members and previous employers. Employment specialists help clients learn from each job experience and also work with the treatment team to analyze job loss, job problems and job successes.

4. Rapid job search for competitive job: Initial employment assessment and first face-to-face employer contact by the client or the employment specialist about a competitive job occurs within 30 days (one month) after program entry.

DOC, INT,
OBS, ISP

- 1= First face-to-face contact with an employer by the client or the employment specialist about a competitive job is on average 271 days or more (> 9 mos.) after program entry.
- 2= First face-to-face contact with an employer by the client or the employment specialist about a competitive job is on average between 151 and 270 days (5-9 mos.) after program entry.
- 3= First face-to-face contact with an employer by the client or the employment specialist about a competitive job is on average between 61 and 150 days (2-5 mos.) after program entry.
- 4= First face-to-face contact with an employer by the client or the employment specialist about a competitive job is on average between 31 and 60 days (1-2 mos.) after program entry.
- 5= The program tracks employer contacts and the first face-to-face contact with an employer by the client or the employment specialist about a competitive job is on average within 30 days (one month) after program entry.

5. Individualized job search: Employment specialists make employer contacts aimed at making a good job match based on clients' preferences (relating to what each person enjoys and their personal goals) and needs (including experience, ability, symptomatology, health, etc.) rather than the job market (i.e., those jobs that are readily available). An individualized job search plan is developed and updated with information from the vocational assessment/profile form and new job/educational experiences.

DOC, INT
OBS, ISP

- 1= Less than 25% of employer contacts by the employment specialist are based on job choices which reflect client's preferences, strengths, symptoms, etc. rather than the job market.
- 2= 25-49% of employer contacts by the employment specialist are based on job choices which reflect client's preferences, strengths, symptoms, etc., rather than the job market.
- 3= 50-74% of employer contacts by the employment specialist are based on job choices which reflect client's preferences, strengths, symptoms, etc., rather than the job market.
- 4= 75-89% of employer contacts by the employment specialist are based on job choices which reflect client's preferences, strengths, symptoms, etc., rather than the job market and are consistent with the current employment plan.
- 5= Employment specialist makes employer contacts based on job choices which reflect client's preferences, strengths, symptoms, lessons learned from previous jobs etc., 90-100% of the time rather than the job market and are consistent with the current employment/job search plan. When clients have limited work experience, employment specialists provide information about a range of job options in the community.

6. Job development - Frequent employer contact: Each employment specialist makes at least 6 face to-face employer contacts per week on behalf of clients looking for work. (Rate for each then calculate average and use the closest scale point.) An employer contact is counted even when an employment specialist meets the same employer more than one time in a week, and when the client is present or not present. Client-specific and generic contacts are included. Employment specialists use a weekly tracking form to document employer contacts.

DOC, INT

- 1= Employment specialist makes less than 2 face-to-face employer contacts that are client-specific per week.
- 2= Employment specialist makes 2 face-to-face employer contacts per week that are client-specific, OR Does not have a process for tracking.
- 3= Employment specialist makes 4 face-to-face employer contacts per week that are client-specific, and uses a tracking form that is reviewed by the SE supervisor on a monthly basis.
- 4= Employment specialist makes 5 face-to-face employer contacts per week that are client-specific, and uses a tracking form that is reviewed by the SE supervisor on a weekly basis.

7. Job development - Quality of employer contact:
Employment specialists build relationships with employers through multiple visits in person that are planned to learn the needs of the employer, convey what the SE program offers to the employer, describe client strengths that are a good match for the employer. (Rate for each employment specialist, then calculate average and use the closest scale point.)

DOC, INT,
OBS

5= Employment specialist makes 6 or more face-to-face employer contacts per week that are client specific, or 2 employer contacts times the number of people looking for work when there are less than 3 people looking for work on their caseload (e.g., new program). In addition, employment specialist uses a tracking form that is reviewed by the SE supervisor on a weekly basis.

1= Employment specialist meets employer when helping client to turn in job applications, OR Employment specialist rarely makes employer contacts.

2= Employment specialist contacts employers to ask about job openings and then shares these “leads” with clients.

3= Employment specialist follows up on advertised job openings by introducing self, describing program, and asking employer to interview client.

4= Employment specialist meets with employers in person whether or not there is a job opening, advocates for clients by describing strengths and asks employers to interview clients.

5= Employment specialist builds relationships with employers through multiple visits in person that are planned to learn the needs of the employer, convey what the SE program offers to the employer, describe client strengths that are a good match for the employer.

8. Diversity of job types: Employment specialists assist clients in obtaining different types of jobs.

DOC, INT,
OBS, ISP

1= Employment specialists assist clients obtain different types of jobs less than 50% of the time.

2= Employment specialists assist clients obtain different types of jobs 50-59% of the time.

3= Employment specialists assist clients obtain different types of jobs 60-69% of the time.

4= Employment specialists assist clients obtain different types of jobs 70-84% of the time.

9. Diversity of employers: Employment specialists assist clients in obtaining jobs with different employers.

DOC, INT,
OBS, ISP

5= Employment specialists assist clients obtain different types of jobs 85-100% of the time.

1= Employment specialists assist clients obtain jobs with the different employers less than 50% of the time.

2= Employment specialists assist clients obtain jobs with the same employers 50-59% of the time.

3= Employment specialists assist clients obtain jobs with different employers 60-69% of the time.

4= Employment specialists assist clients obtain jobs with different employers 70-84% of the time.

5= Employment specialists assist clients obtain jobs with different employers 85-100% of the time.

10. Competitive jobs: Employment specialists provide competitive job options that have permanent status rather than temporary or time-limited status, e.g., TE (transitional employment positions). Competitive jobs pay at least minimum wage, are jobs that anyone can apply for and are not set aside for people with disabilities. (Seasonal jobs and jobs from temporary agencies that other community members use are counted as competitive jobs.)

DOC, INT,
OBS, ISP

1= Employment specialists provide options for permanent, competitive jobs less than 64% of the time, OR There are fewer than 10 current jobs.

2= Employment specialists provide options for permanent, competitive jobs about 65- 74% of the time.

3= Employment specialists provide options for permanent competitive jobs about 75-84%% of the time.

4= Employment specialists provide options for permanent competitive jobs about 85-94% of the time.

5= 95% or more competitive jobs held by clients are permanent.

11. Individualized follow-along supports:

Clients receive different types of support for working a job that are based on the job, client preferences, work history, needs, etc. Supports are provided by a variety of people, including treatment team members (e.g., medication changes, social skills training, encouragement), family, friends, co-workers (i.e., natural supports), and employment specialist. Employment specialist also provides employer support (e.g., educational information, job accommodations) at client's request. Employment specialist offers help with career development, i.e., assistance with education, a more desirable job, or more preferred job duties.

DOC, INT,
OBS, ISP

- 1= Most clients do not receive supports after starting a job.
- 2= About half of the working clients receive a narrow range of supports provided primarily by the employment specialist.
- 3= Most working clients receive a narrow range of supports that are provided primarily by the employment specialist.
- 4= Clients receive different types of support for working a job that are based on the job, client preferences, work history, needs, etc. Employment specialists provide employer supports at the client's request.
- 5= Clients receive different types of support for working a job that are based on the job, client preferences, work history, needs, etc. Employment specialist also provides employer support (e.g., educational information, job accommodations) at client's request. The employment specialist helps people move onto more preferable jobs and also helps people with school or certified training programs. The site provides examples of different types of support including enhanced supports by treatment team members.

12. Time-unlimited follow-along supports:

Employment specialists have 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 clients. Clients are transitioned to step down job supports from a mental health worker following steady employment. Employment specialists contact clients within 3 days of learning about the job loss.

DOC, INT,
OBS, ISP

- 1= Employment specialist does not meet face-to-face with the client after the first month of starting a job.
- 2= Employment specialist has face-to-face contact with less than half of the working clients for at least 4 months after starting a job.
- 3= Employment specialist has face-to-face contact with at least half of the working clients for at least 4 months after starting a job.
- 4= Employment specialist has face-to-face contact with working clients weekly for the first month after starting a job, and at least monthly for a year or more, on average, after working steadily, and desired by clients.
- 5= 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 clients. Clients are transitioned to step down job supports, from a mental health worker following steady employment clients. Clients are transitioned to step down job supports from a mental health worker following steady employment.

Employment specialist contacts clients within 3 days of hearing about the job loss.

13. Community-based services: Employment services such as engagement, job finding and follow-along supports are provided in natural community settings by all employment specialists. (Rate each employment specialist based upon their total weekly scheduled work hours then, calculate the average and use the closest scale point.)

DOC, INT
OBS

- 1= Employment specialist spends 30% time or less in the scheduled work hours in the community.
- 2= Employment specialist spends 30 - 39% time of total scheduled work hours in the community.
- 3= Employment specialist spends 40 -49% of total scheduled work hours in the then community.
- 4= Employment specialist spends 50 - 64% of total scheduled work hours in the community.
- 5= Employment specialist spends 65% or more of total scheduled work hours in the community.

14. Assertive engagement and outreach by integrated treatment team: Service termination is not based on missed appointments or fixed time limits. Systematic documentation of outreach attempts. Engagement and outreach attempts made by integrated team members. Multiple home/community visits. Coordinated visits by employment specialist with integrated team member. Connect with family, when applicable. Once it is clear that the client no longer wants to work or continue SE services, the team stops outreach.

MIS, DOC,
INT, OBS

- 1= Evidence that 2 or less strategies for engagement and outreach are used.
- 2= Evidence that 3 strategies for engagement and outreach are used.
- 3= Evidence that 4 strategies for engagement and outreach are used.
- 4= Evidence that 5 strategies for engagement and outreach are used.
- 5= Evidence that all 6 strategies for engagement and outreach are used: i) Service 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.

*Data sources:

- MIS Management Information System
- DOC Document review: clinical records, agency policy and procedures
- INT Interviews with clients, employment specialists, mental health staff,
VR counselors, families, employers
- OBS Observation (e.g., team meeting, shadowing employment specialists)
- ISP Individualized Service Plan

2/14/96
6/20/01, Updated
1/7/08, Revised

Supported Employment Fidelity Scale Score Sheet

Staffing		
1.	Caseload size	Score:
2.	Employment services staff	Score:
3.	Vocational generalists	Score:
Organization		
1.	Integration of rehabilitation with mental health thru team assignment	Score:
2.	Integration of rehabilitation with mental health thru frequent team member contact	Score:
3.	Collaboration between employment specialists and Vocational Rehabilitation counselors	Score:
4.	Vocational unit	Score:
5.	Role of employment supervisor	Score:
6.	Zero exclusion criteria	Score:
7.	Agency focus on competitive employment	Score:
8.	Executive team support for SE	Score:
Services		
1.	Work incentives planning	Score:
2.	Disclosure	Score:
3.	Ongoing, work-based vocational assessment	Score:
4.	Rapid search for competitive job	Score:
5.	Individualized job search	Score:
6.	Job development—Frequent employer contact	Score:
7.	Job development—Quality of employer contact	Score:
8.	Diversity of job types	Score:
9.	Diversity of employers	Score:
10.	Competitive jobs	Score:
11.	Individualized follow-along supports	Score:
12.	Time-unlimited follow-along supports	Score:
13.	Community-based services	Score:
14.	Assertive engagement and outreach by integrated treatment team	Score:
Total:		

115 – 125	= Exemplary Fidelity
100 - 114	= Good Fidelity
74 – 99	= Fair Fidelity
73 and below	= Not Supported Employment

Sample Client Records Review Form #1

	Record #1	Record #2	Record #3
<p>Employment services staff</p> <p>Does the employment specialist provide vocational services only? How much time is devoted to other activities? <u>Note examples of non-vocational services provided.</u></p>			
<p>Vocational generalist</p> <p>Does the specialist carry out all phases of the employment service: intake, engagement, assessment, job placement, job coaching and follow along?</p>			
<p>Zero exclusion criteria</p> <p>Do specialists serve people: --With serious mental illness (diagnosis, active symptoms)? --With substance use disorders? --Do specialists help people with multiple jobs, regardless of the reason for job loss?</p>			
<p>Agency focus on competitive employment</p> <p>Does the intake form</p>			

include questions about interest in employment? Annual forms (e.g., mental health assessments, treatment plans) include questions about interest in employment?			
Work incentives planning Indication that client was offered help with benefit planning? Are any clients helped to report earnings?			
Disclosure Indication of a discussion about disclosure? More than once? Include notes about what was discussed			
Ongoing work-based vocational assessment Is there a career profile in the chart? Is it comprehensive and complete? More than 2 or 3 jobs of the person's work history? Has it been updated with each new job experience?			
Ongoing work-based vocational assessment Is there any evidence that the person was asked to complete a vocational evaluation (paper and			

pencil test) or situational assessment?			
<p>Rapid job search for competitive job</p> <p>Number of days between first contact with specialist and in-person employer contact (by specialist and/or client)</p>			
<p>Individualized job search</p> <p>Relationship between work interests and employer contacts. Did specialist help the person explore options if all previous work was the same?</p> <p>How is job search related to the person's strengths, personality, needs...</p> <p>Written job search plan? Is it specific to this person? Does the plan indicate the specific steps each person will take to work on the goals?</p>			
<p>Individualized follow-along supports</p> <p>What types of follow-along supports were provided? Who provided supports? Were these congruent with client need?</p>			

Follow-along plan in the chart? Is it specific to this person?						
<p>Time-unlimited follow-along supports</p> <p>How often were in person supports provided in the first week? Month? First three months?</p>						
<p>Community-based services</p> <p>Pick a recent month and count the number of hours in the community?</p> <p>Hours in the office?</p>	Agency	Community	Agency	Community	Agency	Community
<p>Engagement & outreach</p> <p>Did the person begin missing appointments? How did the specialist try to re-engage the person? Did the mental health team help?</p>						
Other notes:						

Sample IPS Supported Employment Fidelity Report

Date: June 7, 2025

To: Claire Ferrell, Executive Director, Fictional Agency
Jon Perez, Clinical Director, Fictional Agency
Kathy Caper, IPS Supervisor, Fictional Agency

From: Bob Ortega, State IPS Training Center
Clarice Jones, State Peer Advocacy Center
Sharon Day, Department of Mental Health

Purpose:

Agency leaders requested this fidelity review to ensure good implementation of the evidence-based practice of IPS supported employment. The same team of reviewers facilitated the first (baseline) IPS fidelity visit seven months ago.

Program Description:

Fictional Agency provides mental health treatment and case management services to 2,000 people with serious mental illnesses each year. Mental health practitioners are organized into five teams. The IPS program was developed about one year ago. Three employment specialists and one full-time supervisor provide assistance with employment.

Method:

Fidelity reviewers visited the agency on May 20 and 21, 2025. They interviewed the agency executive director, clinical director, quality assurance director, IPS supervisor, seven clients, two family members, two mental health treatment supervisors, five case managers, three employment specialists, two Vocational Rehabilitation counselors, and one benefits planner. They observed two mental health treatment team meetings and one vocational unit (IPS) meeting. Reviewers also observed two employment specialists meeting with a total of five employers in order to develop relationships (job development). Reviewers read ten client records and IPS program documentation provided by the IPS supervisor.

Summary:

Significant improvements in fidelity items since the first review include the following:
1) Zero exclusion criteria. Mental health practitioners talk to all people about employment, regardless of substance use disorders, past work performance, symptoms or other factors. Employment specialists are enthusiastic about working with all people who want assistance with jobs and education. Vocational Rehabilitation counselors have changed their practices and now authorize job placement for people regardless of whether they have completed substance abuse treatment.

2) Executive team support for supported employment. IPS has become part of the agency quality assurance process and the executive director shares her enthusiasm about employment with all practitioners.

3) Disclosure. Employment specialists now offer choices about the use of personal information with employers.

4) Job development--frequency of employer contacts and Job development--quality of employer contacts. The IPS team averages six employer contacts per week for each specialist. Working on job development in pairs appears to have helped team members build their skills and confidence.

Areas for further improvement include the following:

1) Integration of rehabilitation with mental health treatment. Two employment specialists are assigned to three treatment teams each. They are unable to attend each team meeting weekly and so rotate their attendance. Further, because they are covering so many teams, there is a waiting list for IPS. Reviewers urge agency administrators to explore options to develop at least one more employment specialist position.

2) Due to the waiting list (see above), employment specialists do not provide job supports to working people for more than six months. Please see Time-unlimited follow-along supports.

3) Individualized job search. In a few cases, clients were encouraged to accept jobs with employers who had strong relationships with the IPS program, rather than jobs that were a good match for their interests, career goals, needs, etc. Please see Individualized job search, and Diversity of employers.

Reviewers will call Kathy Caper to arrange a meeting to discuss this report.

IPS SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT FIDELITY REPORT

Staffing

1. Caseload size

Employment specialists have individual employment caseloads. The maximum caseload for any full-time employment specialist is 20 or fewer clients.	Rating: 5
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Sources of Information: Employment specialist interviews, IPS program data

Comments: Caseload sizes were 19, 18, and 19. The average caseload size per employment specialist was 18.

2. Employment services staff

Employment specialists provide only employment services.	Rating: 5
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Sources of Information: Employment specialist interviews, client interviews, client record reviews, mental health practitioner interviews, observation of vocational unit meetings

Comments: Reviewers observed one example of an employment specialist helping a client with medical appointments. Otherwise, all services provided by IPS team members were focused on employment.

3. Vocational generalists

Each employment specialist carries out all phases of employment service, including intake, engagement, assessment, job placement, job coaching, and follow-along supports before step down to less intensive employment support from another MH practitioner. (Note: It is not expected that each employment specialist will provide benefits counseling to their clients. Referrals to a highly trained benefits counselor are in keeping with high fidelity, see Item # 1 in “Services”.)	Rating: 5
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Sources of Information: Employment specialist interviews, client interviews, client record reviews, observation of vocational unit meetings

Comments: Each employment specialist provides the full range of employment services including engagement, completing the career profile, job search, job coaching, and other job supports.

Organization

1. Integration of rehabilitation with mental health thru team assignment

Each employment specialist is attached to one or two mental health	Rating: 2
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treatment teams from which at least 90% of the specialist's caseload is comprised.	
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Sources of Information: Employment specialist interviews, IPS supported employment supervisor data

Comments: One employment specialist is assigned to two teams and receives all of her referrals from those teams. Two specialists are assigned to three teams each. They receive a significant number of referrals from each of the three teams.

Employment specialists must coordinate services with mental health practitioners and Vocational Rehabilitation counselors as well as spending most of their working hours away from their offices. Coordination of services can become overly cumbersome if employment specialists are asked to work with more than one to two mental health treatment teams.

Recommendations

Assign each employment specialist to one or two mental health treatment teams only.

Create another employment specialist position to cover two mental health treatment teams.

2. Integration of rehabilitation with mental health thru frequent team member contact

Employment specialists actively participate in weekly mental health treatment team meetings (not replaced by administrative meetings) that discuss individual clients and their employment goals with shared decision-making. Employment specialist's office is in close proximity to (or shared with) their mental health treatment team members. Documentation of mental health treatment and employment services are integrated in a single client chart. Employment specialists help the team think about employment for people who have not yet been referred to supported employment services.	Rating: 3
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Sources of Information: Employment specialist interviews, mental health practitioner interviews, mental health supervisor interview, observation of mental health treatment team meeting

- Employment specialist attends weekly mental health treatment team meetings.
- Employment specialist participates actively in treatment team meetings with shared decision-making.
- Employment services documentation (i.e., vocational assessment/profile, employment plan, progress notes) is integrated into client's mental health treatment record.

- Employment specialist's office is in close proximity to (or shared with) their mental health treatment team members.
- Employment specialist helps the team think about employment for people who haven't yet been referred to supported employment services.

Comments: Employment specialists rotate their attendance at mental health team meetings. They report that they do not have time to attend three mental health teams each week (see previous item) and that some of the meetings are held concurrently.

When specialists are in the meetings, they participate actively in discussions aimed at helping people with their education and employment goals. Mental health practitioners and employment specialists share ideas for solutions based on each person's strengths and interests.

Each client has one record at the agency that includes mental health treatment and employment documents.

Mental health practitioners gave examples of times that employment specialists suggested employment for people who were not receiving IPS services.

Employment specialists cover two to three mental health teams each. They are only able to locate their office space with one of those teams.

Recommendations

See recommendations for Integration of rehabilitation with mental health treatment through team assignment.

Require specialists to attend weekly meetings for each mental health treatment team to which they are assigned.

Re-locate offices for employment specialists so they can work near their mental health treatment team members.

3. Collaboration between employment specialists and Vocational Rehabilitation counselors

The employment specialists and VR counselors have frequent contact for the purpose of discussing shared clients and identifying potential referrals.	Rating: 4
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Sources of Information: Employment specialist interviews, Vocational Rehabilitation counselor interview(s), IPS supported employment supervisor interview

Comments: Vocational Rehabilitation counselors and IPS supported employment team members meet as a group on a quarterly basis to discuss shared cases.

Recommendation

Meet with the local Vocational Rehabilitation supervisor to discuss strategies to improve collaboration. Request monthly meetings to discuss client goals and annual goals for client outcomes.

4. Vocational unit

At least 2 full-time employment specialists and a team leader comprise the employment unit. They have weekly client-based group supervision following the supported employment model in which strategies are identified and job leads are shared. They provide coverage for each other’s caseload when needed.	Rating: 5
--	-----------

Sources of Information: Employment specialist interviews, IPS supervisor interviews, observation of vocational unit meetings

Comments: The employment specialists and IPS supervisor meet weekly. In the meeting observed by fidelity reviewers, the team celebrated successes, discussed recent efforts to partner with employers, and brainstormed about various client situations.

5. Role of employment supervisor

Supported employment unit is led by a supported employment team leader. Employment specialists’ skills are developed and improved through outcome-based supervision. All five key roles of the employment supervisor are present.	Rating: 3
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Sources of Information: Employment specialist interviews, IPS supported employment supervisor interview, review of field mentoring records, review of IPS team goals and outcome reports

- One full-time equivalent (FTE) supervisor is responsible for no more than 10 employment specialists. The supervisor does not have other supervisory responsibilities. (Program leaders supervising fewer than ten employment specialists may spend a percentage of time on other supervisory activities on a prorated basis. For example, an employment supervisor responsible for 4 employment specialists may be devoted to SE supervision half time.)
- Supervisor conducts weekly supported employment supervision designed to review client situations and identify new strategies and ideas to help clients in their work lives.
- Supervisor communicates with mental health treatment team leaders to ensure that services are integrated, to problem solve programmatic issues (such as referral process, or transfer of follow-along to mental health workers) and to be a champion for the value of work. Attends a meeting for each mental health treatment team on a quarterly basis.

- Supervisor accompanies employment specialists, who are new or having difficulty with job development, in the field monthly to improve skills by observing, modeling, and giving feedback on skills, e.g., meeting employers for job development.
- Supervisor reviews current client outcomes with employment specialists and sets goals to improve program performance at least quarterly.

Comments: The IPS supervisor is responsible for supervising three employment specialists. She also carries a caseload of four clients. All of her duties are related to the IPS program.

The IPS supervisor has not attended mental health team meetings on a quarterly basis to ensure that services are integrated. She does not meet with mental health supervisors to discuss how practitioners are working together.

The supervisor has done an excellent job of helping the team learn about employer relationships and she continues to provide field mentoring monthly for each employment specialist.

The IPS supervisor holds weekly vocational unit meetings (see Vocational unit).

The supervisor collects outcomes for the team and for individual employment specialists. She shares outcomes with the team, but has not yet helped team members set goals for improvement.

Recommendations

IPS supervisor: Attend mental health treatment team meetings on at least a quarterly basis to ensure that the employment specialists are comfortable sharing their ideas and opinions. Model ways to engage team members in discussions about education and employment plans.

IPS supervisor: Help team members set goals to improve client outcomes. An example of a team goal might be “Increase job starts from 10 to 11 each quarter.” Review progress on goals quarterly and revise as needed. An example of an individual employment specialist goal is “Engage at least 80% of people who are referred to your caseload,” or “Increase the number of working people on your caseload from eight to nine by the end of the next quarter.”

6. Zero exclusion criteria

All clients interested in working have access to supported employment services regardless of job readiness factors, substance abuse, symptoms, history of violent behavior, cognition impairments, treatment non-adherence, and personal presentation. These apply during supported employment services too. Employment specialists offer to help with another job when one has ended, regardless of the reason that the job	Rating: 4
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ended or number of jobs held. If VR has screening criteria, the mental health agency does not use them to exclude anybody. Clients are not screened out formally or informally.	
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Sources of Information: Employment specialist interviews, client interviews, mental health practitioner interviews, observation of mental health treatment team meeting, family interviews

Comments: Mental health practitioners said they encourage all of their clients to consider employment. One case manager said, “Even if someone has a problem with drugs or alcohol, employment can help that person reconsider how substances are affecting his life.” An employment specialist said, “It doesn't matter if someone is having symptoms from his illness. There is a job out there for everyone.” One family member reported that other employment programs had excluded her son in the past because he did not use medication to manage his symptoms but the IPS program helped him to find a job.

The IPS Supported Employment Fidelity Manual (Dartmouth 2015) instructs reviewers not to score 5 if there is a waiting list because clients may become discouraged about employment when they must wait to receive services. Also, practitioners often stop making referrals when they know that there is a waiting list for IPS.

Recommendations

Create another employment specialist position.

7. Agency focus on competitive employment

Agency promotes competitive work through multiple OBS strategies. Agency intake includes questions about interest in employment. Agency displays written postings (e.g., brochures, bulletin boards, posters) about employment and supported employment services. The focus should be with the agency programs that provide services to adults with severe mental illness. Agency supports ways for clients to share work stories with other clients and staff. Agency measures rate of competitive employment and shares this information with agency leadership and staff.	Rating: 3
--	-----------

Sources of Information: Employment specialist interviews, client interviews, client record reviews, mental health practitioner interviews, agency administrator interviews, observation of agency facilities

- Agency intake includes questions about interest in employment.
- Agency includes questions about interest in employment on all annual (or semiannual) assessment or treatment plan reviews.
- Agency displays written postings (e.g., brochures, bulletin boards, posters) about working and supported employment services, in lobby and other waiting areas.

- Agency supports ways for clients to share work stories with other clients and staff (e.g., agency-wide employment recognition events, in-service training, peer support groups, agency newsletter articles, invited speakers at client treatment groups, etc.) at least twice a year.
- Agency measures rate of competitive employment on at least a quarterly basis and shares outcomes with agency leadership and staff.

Comments: The agency mental health intake form asks about work history, but does not ask about interest in working now.

Agency administrators have begun to track the rate of employment for all adults with serious mental illnesses, but that information is not shared with staff. Sharing the employment rate will help practitioners understand how their efforts help people and will encourage practitioners to continue to talk about employment.

Recommendations

Revise the agency intake process to include questions about interest in employment.

Examples of questions are: Are you interested in work? Do you know about work incentives that allow people to work and still receive benefits? Would you like to learn more about our employment services? Document these conversations in the client record.

Share the rate of employment for all people who have serious mental illnesses.

8. Executive team support for SE

Agency executive team members (e.g., CEO/Executive Director, Chief Operating Officer, QA Director, Chief Financial Officer, Clinical Director, Medical Director, Human Resource Director) assist with supported employment implementation and sustainability. All five key components of executive team support are present.	Rating: 4
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Sources of Information: IPS supervisor interviews, executive team member interview, CEO interview, QA report reviews, steering committee meeting minute review

- Executive Director and Clinical Director demonstrate knowledge regarding the principles of evidence-based supported employment.
- Agency QA process includes an explicit review of the SE program, or components of the program, at least every 6 months through the use of the Supported Employment Fidelity Scale or until achieving high fidelity, and at least yearly thereafter. Agency QA process uses the results of the fidelity assessment to improve SE implementation and sustainability.
- At least one member of the executive team actively participates at SE leadership team meetings (steering committee meetings) that occur at least every six months for high fidelity programs and at least quarterly for programs that have not yet achieved high fidelity. Steering committee is defined as a diverse group of

stakeholders charged with reviewing fidelity, program implementation, and the service delivery system. Committee develops written action plans aimed at developing or sustaining high fidelity services.

- The agency CEO/Executive Director communicates how SE services support the mission of the agency and articulates clear and specific goals for SE and/or competitive employment to all agency staff during the first six months and at least annually (i.e., SE kickoff, all-agency meetings, agency newsletters, etc.). This item is not delegated to another administrator.
- SE program leader shares information about EBP barriers and facilitators with the executive team (including the CEO) at least twice each year. The executive team helps the program leader identify and implement solutions to barriers.

Comments: The executive director and clinical director understand how IPS supported employment differs from other vocational approaches.

The agency quality assurance staff reviewed the results of the first fidelity report and developed action steps to improve IPS implementation and sustainability. Much of the fidelity action plan had been accomplished when reviewers visited the agency for this review.

The clinical director participates in steering committee meetings for IPS on a quarterly basis. The meetings include a diverse membership (IPS supervisor, one employment specialist, clients, one family member, and two Vocational Rehabilitation counselors). The group meets monthly to focus on strategies to improve fidelity and to help employment specialists connect with employers.

The executive director spoke about the importance of employment at the IPS kickoff seven months ago. In addition, all practitioners are convinced that the director prioritizes helping people with employment.

The IPS supervisor does not meet regularly with the executive team to discuss program accomplishments and challenges. The clinical director reported that she meets with agency leaders and shares pertinent information about the program. We encourage the IPS supervisor to meet twice a year with agency leaders, including the agency executive director, since the supervisor is the person who knows the program best.

Recommendation

Executive team: In a meeting agenda at least twice yearly, include the IPS supervisor to talk about what is going well in the program and to ask for help, as needed.

Services

1. Work incentives planning

All clients are offered assistance in obtaining comprehensive, individualized work incentives planning before starting a new job and assistance accessing work incentives planning thereafter when making decisions about changes in work hours and pay. Work incentives	Rating: 4
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<p>planning includes SSA benefits, medical benefits, medication subsidies, housing subsidies, food stamps, spouse and dependent children benefits, past job retirement benefits and any other source of income. Clients are provided information and assistance about reporting earnings to SSA, housing programs, VA programs, etc., depending on the person's benefits.</p>	
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Sources of Information: Employment specialist interviews, client interviews, client record reviews, Vocational Rehabilitation counselor interview(s), benefits planner interview

Comments: Vocational Rehabilitation counselors offer access to trained benefits counselors who provide comprehensive and individualized benefits planning, however, only clients with active Vocational Rehabilitation cases can access that service. About 75% of people on the IPS caseload have an open case with Vocational Rehabilitation.

Recommendation

Develop strategies for people to receive benefits planning even if they do not work with a Vocational Rehabilitation counselor. For example, learn whether Social Security Administration benefits planners (WIPA-Work Incentives Planning Assistance) are available to help. Consider training for an agency staff person to become a Certified Work Incentives Counselor.

2. Disclosure

<p>Employment specialists provide clients with accurate information and assist with evaluating their choices to make an informed decision regarding what is revealed to the employer about having a disability.</p>	<p>Rating :4</p>
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Sources of Information: Employment specialist interviews, client interviews, client record reviews

- Employment specialists do not require all clients to disclose their psychiatric disability at the work site in order to receive services.
- Employment specialists offer to discuss with clients the possible costs and benefits (pros and cons) of disclosure at the work site in advance of clients disclosing at the work site. Employment specialists describe how disclosure relates to requesting accommodations and the employment specialist's role communicating with the employer.
- Employment specialists discuss specific information to be disclosed (e.g., disclose receiving mental health treatment, or presence of a psychiatric disability, or difficulty with anxiety, or unemployed for a period of time, etc.) and offer examples of what could be said to employers.

- ☒ Employment specialists discuss disclosure on more than one occasion (e.g., if clients have not found employment after two months or if clients report difficulties on the job.)

Comments: Clients remembered being asked about their preferences about disclosure and said that employment specialists honored their choices. During the fidelity visit, employment specialists gave examples of how they talk to clients about disclosing a disability to employers. They described how some job seekers might choose to use disclosure for some employers and not others. They also gave examples of when job seekers changed their minds about using disclosure after being hired. Although employment specialists adhere to each person's preference for disclosure of a disability, they said that they encourage job seekers to use disclose because they believe their advocacy results in more job offers. Employment specialists did not report asking each person for *his* perspective about the possible costs and benefits to using disclosure.

Recommendations

Ask clients to share their opinions about the possible risks and benefits of using disclosure, rather than offering advice to clients.

Use a disclosure worksheet to help employment specialists talk about disclosure with their clients. An example of such a form is at <http://www.dartmouthips.org/resources/programs/program-tools> .

3. Ongoing, work-based vocational assessment

<p>Initial vocational assessment occurs over 2-3 sessions and is updated with information from work experiences in competitive jobs. A vocational profile form that includes information about preferences, experiences, skills, current adjustment, strengths, personal contacts, etc, is updated with each new job experience. Aims at problem solving using environmental assessments and consideration of reasonable accommodations. Sources of information include he client, treatment team, clinical records, and with the client's permission from family members and previous employers.</p>	<p>Rating: 4</p>
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Sources of Information: Employment specialist interviews, client interviews, client record reviews, family interviews, Vocational Rehabilitation counselor interview

Comments: Employment specialists use a comprehensive career profile to learn about each person's employment and education goals, work history, hobbies, supports, culture, etc. They include information from the mental health treatment team, and family members (with client permission). The profile is not updated with new job or educational experiences.

Updating the profile is done with the worker/student in order to help analyze the reasons that jobs (or school) were successful or not. Updates also help future practitioners learn about what has helped the person in the past.

Recommendation

Update the profile with each new job and educational experience. Examples of updates for the career profile may be found at <http://www.dartmouthips.org/resources/programs/program-tools> .

4. Rapid job search for competitive job

Initial employment assessment and first face-to-face employer contact by the client or the employment specialist about a competitive job occurs within 30 days (one month) after program entry.	Rating: 4
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Sources of Information: Client interviews, client record reviews

Comments: The days to first in-person contact with an employer by the employment specialist or job seeker were: 7, 9, 13, 14, 18, 25, 19, 31, 37, and 72. The median number of days to first employer contact was 21.5.

Recommendation

IPS supervisor: Track number of days from the client's first meeting with the employment specialist to the first in-person employer contact by either the employment specialist and/or client. Doing so will ensure that you can follow up when people are not helped with a rapid job search.

5. Individualized job search

Employment specialists make employer contacts aimed at making a good job match based on clients' preferences (relating to what each person enjoys and their personal goals) and needs (including experience, ability, symptomatology, health, etc.) rather than the job market (i.e., those jobs that are readily available). An individualized job search plan is developed and updated with information from the vocational assessment/profile form and new job/educational experiences.	Rating: 4
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Sources of Information: Employment specialist interviews, client interviews, client record reviews, mental health practitioner interviews, observation of vocational unit meetings, Vocational Rehabilitation counselor interview(s), family interviews

Comments: In some situations, employment specialists were able to help people with very specific job preferences such as a job within walking distance of a person's home and a job that was less than 15 hours per week. These were excellent examples of individualized job searches. In a few cases, clients were encouraged to take jobs that were readily available. One client record indicated that because a person had a felony, she was

encouraged to take a job at a factory that had hired others from the IPS program in the past. A client interviewed said that he had been encouraged to accept a job at a department store that regularly works with the program, “My employment specialist said that jobs are hard to find.”

Recommendations

Refrain from encouraging people to take jobs that are readily available. Instead, search for jobs related to each person's interests, career goals, preferences and needs related to a disability or other issue.

Help people with legal histories to explain what happened in the past and how they are moving their lives forward. Practice those statements with job seekers. Help obtain letters of reference. More information about helping job seekers with legal histories can be found at www.dartmouthips.org/resources/programs/program-tools .

6. Job development - Frequent employer contact

<p>Each employment specialist makes at least 6 face-to-face employer contacts per week on behalf of clients looking for work. (Rate for each then calculate average and use the closest scale point.) An employer contact is counted even when an employment specialist meets the same employer more than one time in a week, and when the client is present or not present. Client-specific and generic contacts are included. Employment specialists use a weekly tracking form to document employer contacts.</p>	<p>Rating: 5</p>
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Sources of Information: IPS supervisor interviews, review of employer contact logs

Comments: Reviewers read two months of employer contact logs for each employment specialist (146 logs). The average weekly number of contacts per specialist was six.

Recommendation

Ensure that *each* specialist averages six employer contacts per week.

7. Job development - Quality of employer contact

<p>Employment specialists build relationships with employers through multiple visits in person that are planned to learn the needs of the employer, convey what the SE program offers to the employer, describe client strengths that are a good match for the employer. (Rate for each employment specialist, then calculate average and use the closest scale point.)</p>	<p>Rating: 4</p>
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Sources of Information: Employment specialist interviews, IPS supervisor interviews, observation of employment specialist conducting employer contacts

Comments: Reviewers observed two employment specialists as they met with employers to build relationships. They observed a total of five employer contacts. Employment specialists meet with managers to ask for a 20-minute appointment. They return to learn about each person's hiring preferences and business needs. During the scheduled appointment specialists ask open-ended questions and encourage the employer to talk about her business. They said that they typically follow-up with the employer a few days later to thank him or her for the appointment and, possibly, to discuss a job candidate.

Employment specialists do not maintain employer relationships over time. When an employer does not have a job opening after the first two or three visits, employment specialists do not routinely keep in touch with those employers. Though it would not be possible to continually visit every employer, a better strategy is to keep a list of 20 employers who are interested in working with the IPS program. Visit those employers every four to six weeks to maintain relationships and hear about future job openings, even when the person for whom the job was initially considered is no longer interested in the employer.

Recommendation

Keep track of employers for long-term relationships. Ask each employment specialist to keep a list of 20 employers whom she will visit every four to six weeks. Review lists during supervision to encourage repeat visits and to help specialists think about what to say to employers.

8. Diversity of job types

Employment specialists assist clients in obtaining different types of jobs.	Rating: 4
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Sources of Information: IPS program data, interviews with employment specialists

Comments: Data from a list of jobs currently held by clients in the IPS program were used to rate this item. Job types were peer specialist, cashier (3 people), cleaner (3 people), dog groomer, front desk worker, clerical worker, and furniture maker. Nine job types divided by 11 jobs is .81 (81%). The IPS Supported Employment Fidelity Manual (Dartmouth 2015) instructs reviewers to ignore when a job type is repeated one time.

Recommendations

Help each person search for jobs related to what he enjoys, his strengths, and other preferences.

Continue to learn about local jobs by visiting different types of businesses, visiting the chamber of commerce, and talking with Vocational Rehabilitation counselors.

9. Diversity of employers

Employment specialists assist clients in obtaining jobs with different employers.	Rating: 5
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Sources of Information: Employment specialist interviews, IPS program data

Comments: Out of 11 working people, three are working for a local cleaning company. Ten examples of employers divided by 11 jobs = .9 (90%). The IPS Supported Employment Fidelity Manual (Dartmouth 2015) instructs reviewers to ignore when a business is repeated one time.

Recommendation

Do not rely on employers who have hired people in the past. Instead, meet with multiple employers who reflect the interests, experience, preferences, and needs of clients on the IPS caseload.

10. Competitive jobs

Employment specialists provide competitive job options that have permanent status rather than temporary or time-limited status, e.g., TE (transitional employment positions). Competitive jobs pay at least minimum wage, are jobs that anyone can apply for and are not set aside for people with disabilities. (Seasonal jobs and jobs from temporary agencies that other community members use are counted as competitive jobs.)	Rating: 5
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Sources of Information: IPS program data, IPS supervisor interviews

Comments: All jobs were competitive.

11. Individualized follow-along supports

Clients receive different types of support for working a job that are based on the job, client preferences, work history, needs, etc. Supports are provided by a variety of people, including treatment team members (e.g., medication changes, social skills training, encouragement), family, friends, co-workers (i.e., natural supports), and employment specialist. Employment specialist also provides employer support (e.g., educational information, job accommodations) at client's request. Employment specialist offers help with career development, i.e., assistance with education, a more desirable job, or more preferred job duties.	Rating: 5
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Sources of Information: Employment specialist interviews, client interviews, client record reviews, observation of vocational unit meetings

Comments: Job support plans were individualized and related to each person's strengths, preferences and past work experiences. Plans include specific steps that the employment specialist and client will take to ensure job success. Employment specialists provide a range of job supports based on each person's preferences, needs, and current job. Clients

reported that the job supports they received were helpful. One person was especially appreciative of help talking to her employer.

Types of supports reviewers learned about included meetings to discuss the job, employer supports, help learning the bus route, assistance with work clothes and tools, help learning new job duties, assistance reporting income to Social Security Administration, phone call supports, help asking for an accommodation, and family meetings.

12. Time-unlimited follow-along supports

<p>Employment specialists have 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 clients. Clients are transitioned to step down job supports from a mental health worker following steady employment. Employment specialists contact clients within 3 days of learning about the job loss.</p>	<p>Rating: 3</p>
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Sources of Information: Employment specialist interviews, IPS supervisor interviews, client interviews, client record reviews, family interviews

Comments: Employment specialists meet regularly with working clients during the first few months of employment. For example, one client reported meeting her employment specialist weekly at her home. A family member shared that an employment specialist met with her son daily for the first two weeks that he was working and she believed that this helped him maintain his job. The IPS supervisor reported that she routinely reviews job support plans and follows up when intensive supports are not indicated for people who have new jobs.

Employment specialists said they typically close cases after people have been employed for six months because there are people on a waiting list for the IPS program. The IPS supervisor agreed that most cases are closed at six months employment.

Recommendation

Offer job supports for about a year, on average. Keep cases open as long as workers need and desire job supports.

13. Community-based services

<p>Employment services such as engagement, job finding and follow-along supports are provided in natural community settings by all employment specialists. (Rate each employment specialist based upon their total weekly scheduled work hours, then calculate the average and use the closest scale point.)</p>	<p>Rating: 5</p>
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Sources of Information: Client interviews, client record reviews, mental health practitioner interviews, employment specialist calendar reviews

Comments: Clients reported that they usually see their employment specialists in community settings. Mental health practitioners reported that they rarely see employment specialists in the office building. Reviewers asked employment specialists to use their appointment books to describe some of their work days. According to these conversations, employment specialists spent 70% of their time, on average, in the community.

14. Assertive engagement and outreach by integrated treatment team

Service termination is not based on missed appointments or fixed time limits. Systematic documentation of outreach attempts. Engagement and outreach attempts made by integrated team members. Multiple home/community visits. Coordinated visits by employment specialist with integrated team member. Connect with family, when applicable. Once it is clear that the client no longer wants to work or continue SE services, the team stops outreach.	Rating: 4
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Sources of Information: Employment specialist interviews, client record reviews, mental health practitioner interviews, family interviews, client interviews

- Service termination is not based on missed appointments or fixed time limits.
- Systematic documentation of outreach attempts.
- Engagement and outreach attempts made by integrated team members.
- Multiple home/community visits.
- Coordinated visits by employment specialist with integrated team member.
- Connect with family, when applicable.

Comments: Employment specialists use a variety of strategies to re-engage clients. They do not coordinate visits with case managers because that would not be billable for both practitioners.

Recommendation

Consider coordinated visits that overlap briefly so that both practitioners could bill for the majority of their time. For example, an employment specialist could attend the last 15 minutes of a case management appointment to connect with a person.

Staffing		
1.	Caseload size	Score: 5
2.	Employment services staff	Score: 5
3.	Vocational generalists	Score: 5
Organization		
1.	Integration of rehabilitation with mental health thru team assignment	Score: 2
2.	Integration of rehabilitation with mental health thru frequent team member contact	Score: 3
3.	Collaboration between employment specialists and Vocational Rehabilitation counselors	Score: 4
4.	Vocational unit	Score: 5
5.	Role of employment supervisor	Score: 3
6.	Zero exclusion criteria	Score: 4
7.	Agency focus on competitive employment	Score: 3
8.	Executive team support for SE	Score: 4
Services		
1.	Work incentives planning	Score: 4
2.	Disclosure	Score: 4
3.	Ongoing, work-based vocational assessment	Score: 4
4.	Rapid job search for competitive job	Score: 4
5.	Individualized job search	Score: 4
6.	Job development - Frequent employer contact	Score: 5
7.	Job development - Quality of employer contact	Score: 4
8.	Diversity of job types	Score: 4
9.	Diversity of employers	Score: 5
10.	Competitive jobs	Score: 5
11.	Individualized follow-along supports	Score: 5
12.	Time-unlimited follow-along supports	Score: 3
13.	Community-based services	Score: 5
14.	Assertive engagement and outreach by integrated treatment team	Score: 4
Total:		103

115 - 125 = Exemplary Fidelity

100 - 114 = Good Fidelity

74 - 99 = Fair Fidelity

73 and below = Not Supported Employment

Fidelity Interview Questions by Stakeholder Group

The following questions are organized by stakeholder (e.g., IPS employment specialist, IPS supervisor, family member, etc.) to address the fidelity items. The listed questions are examples to help structure the interviews. In order to obtain the information needed to score all the fidelity items, we recommend that all reviewers (i.e., experienced reviewers as well less experienced reviewers) use these questions to guide the fidelity review.

Reviewers should select questions for IPS peer specialists based on their responsibilities (job descriptions may vary by location).

Tailor the terms used in the questions to the terminology used by agency staff. For example, if the IPS team is integrated with a housing team instead of a mental health team, use housing team.

Sample questions for IPS specialists

Questions:	Relates to fidelity item:
How many people are on your caseload?	Caseload Size
Can you please share your caseload list with me?	Caseload Size
Are there some people on your caseload who are inactive? How do you define inactive? Are those people included in the total number on your caseload?	Caseload Size
Are you responsible for writing employment plans for inactive clients?	Caseload Size
How do you decide when someone’s IPS case should be closed?	Caseload Size
Are you responsible for any duties at the agency other than employment and education? Do you help with groups, day treatment services, or transportation for medical appointments? How often? Did you perform any of those activities last week?	Employment Services Staff
Are you ever asked to carryout case management services? For example, have you been asked to drive someone to a food bank for donated food, help someone find housing, drive someone to doctor appointments, manage a mental health crisis, help someone apply for disability benefits? When was the last time? How often does this occur?	Employment Services Staff
Is there anyone on your caseload who does not have a case manager/service coordinator? What happens when this person needs case management services?	Employment Services Staff
I am interested in learning more about your job and understanding what a typical day is like for you. Can you show me in your datebook what you did last Tuesday? What time did you start work that day?	Employment Services Staff

What did you do first? Where was that meeting? And what did you do next? What time was that?	
Do you ever find that case manager/service coordinator caseloads are so high that you help them out? What is an example? When was the last time that happened?	Employment Services Staff
If a person is referred to you, are you the first person from the IPS team to meet that person?	Vocational Generalists
For the people on your caseload, who conducts the career profile? The job search activities? On-the-job training, if that is needed? Job or educational supports?	Vocational Generalists
Do you ever refer people to other vocational programs? Which ones? How many times in the past three months? How would you decide to make a referral to another program?	Vocational Generalists
Who refers people to you? Anyone else?	Integration of Rehabilitation with Mental Health thru Team Assignment
Within the mental health agency, who makes referrals to your caseload?	Integration of Rehabilitation with Mental Health thru Team Assignment
How many people on your caseload do not have a mental health worker from the agency?	Integration of Rehabilitation with Mental Health thru Team Assignment
Let's review your caseload. Which people do not receive mental health services from Teams A or B (your assigned teams)?	Integration of Rehabilitation with Mental Health thru Team Assignment
Do you attend mental health treatment team meetings? How often?	Integration of Rehabilitation with Mental Health thru Frequent Team Member Contact
Do you usually stay for the entire meeting?	Integration of Rehabilitation with Mental Health thru Frequent Team Member Contact
Do you represent any of your fellow IPS specialists when you attend mental health team meetings?	Integration of Rehabilitation with Mental Health thru Frequent Team Member Contact

What is the purpose of attending the meetings? Are the meetings helpful to you? Why or why not?	Integration of Rehabilitation with Mental Health thru Frequent Team Member Contact
What are some examples of how mental health practitioners have helped people with education and employment goals?	Integration of Rehabilitation with Mental Health thru Frequent Team Member Contact
How do you communicate with medication prescribers (psychiatrists, nurse practitioners)? Has that been effective?	Integration of Rehabilitation with Mental Health thru Frequent Team Member Contact
How many Vocational Rehabilitation counselors work with people who are on your caseload? How often do you meet with each of these counselors? Where do you meet?	Collaboration Between Employment Specialists and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors
How do the Vocational Rehabilitation counselors help people on your caseload?	Collaboration Between Employment Specialists and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors
How does everyone work together with clients to develop the employment plan?	Collaboration Between Employment Specialists and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors
To whom do you report?	Vocational Unit
Can you share an example of a time that you helped another specialist or that someone helped you?	Vocational Unit
How often do you meet with the other IPS specialists? What do you do during these meetings? How are the meetings helpful?	Vocational Unit
Please give an example of the last time that you shared a job lead with someone else on the team.	Vocational Unit
Was the meeting that we observed today a typical meeting?	Vocational Unit

Do you meet with your supervisor for individual supervision (or for group supervision)? How often? What happens during those meetings?	Role of Employment Supervisor
How did you learn how to build relationships with employers? Did your supervisor ever go with you to meet employers? When was the last time?	Role of Employment Supervisor
Do you receive information about the outcomes for the IPS program? How do you receive that information? Does your team have goals to improve outcomes? What are the goals and how will you achieve them?	Role of Employment Supervisor
Does your supervisor ever help you set performance goals for yourself? What is an example?	Role of Employment Supervisor
Who should be referred to IPS? Who should not be referred to IPS? How about people with substance abuse problems? People with histories of violence? Someone who misses appointments with his counselor?	Zero Exclusion Criteria
If someone leaves a job without notice because he does not like the job, what do you do?	Zero Exclusion Criteria
If someone lost a job because of symptoms, would you help that person find another job? What next steps would you recommend?	Zero Exclusion Criteria
Can you serve people who are not open with state Vocational Rehabilitation? (If the answer is no, “Are there any people whom Vocational Rehabilitation counselors cannot serve?”)	Zero Exclusion Criteria
Do some case managers or therapists refer people more frequently than others? Does your caseload list include the name of the practitioner who referred each person to you?	Zero Exclusion Criteria
Does the executive director think that employment is a critical component of services at this agency? What gives you that impression?	Executive Team Support for SE
What is the difference between “competitive employment” and other types of employment?	Executive Team Support for SE
What type of benefits counseling is available for people in this program? Who provides benefits planning?	Work Incentives Planning
How do you keep track of which people receive benefits planning and which people do not meet with a benefits planner?	Work Incentives Planning
What do you do if someone does not attend a benefits appointment?	Work Incentives Planning
How many of the people on your caseload have participated in benefits planning?	Work Incentives Planning
Do you know if people receive examples of what would happen to their total income if they worked part or full time? Do they receive written examples to refer to later?	Work Incentives Planning

Do you ever help clients report their earnings? Can you give an example?	Work Incentives Planning
Have you ever helped someone receive benefits planning a second or third time because of a change in income?	Work Incentives Planning
If you were going to help me with a job search, how would you explain disclosure? What if I said that I wasn't sure whether or not I should disclose? What if I said that I didn't want to share information about my mental illness?	Disclosure
Do you ever bring up disclosure on more than one occasion? If so, when would you have another discussion about disclosure? Can you give me an example?	Disclosure
I am guessing that some people on your caseload are okay with disclosure and some are not. About what percentage of people on your caseload choose to disclose?	Disclosure
How long does it take to complete the career profile? What happens after you fill it out—do you refer to it again for ideas that will help a job search, job support? Do you add information to it?	Ongoing, Work-based Vocational Assessment
What are sources of information for the profile?	Ongoing, Work-based Vocational Assessment
Do you have clients who would benefit from a vocational evaluation or situational assessment? Please explain.	Ongoing, Work-based Vocational Assessment
In the past six months, how many people on your caseload have completed a vocational evaluation or situational assessment?	Ongoing, Work-based Vocational Assessment
Do you ever suggest volunteer work in order to learn about a person's work behaviors and work skills?	Ongoing, Work-based Vocational Assessment
What happens after you first meet someone? Please describe your first few meetings.	Rapid Job Search for Competitive Jobs
About how long does it take to start the job search? Are there ever any exceptions? Why would those exceptions occur?	Rapid Job Search for Competitive Jobs
How did you decide which employers to contact for (name of client)? How did you decide which type of jobs?	Individualized Job Search
What jobs do you recommend for people who have not worked in many years?	Individualized Job Search
What jobs do you recommend for people who have legal histories?	Individualized Job Search
Please tell me about someone who needed a very specific type of job. How did you help that person find the right job?	Individualized Job Search
Do you ever suggest jobs to clients? How do you decide what type of jobs to suggest?	Individualized Job Search

Does the case manager/service coordinator or psychiatrist help you and your clients think of good job matches? What is an example?	Individualized Job Search
If the IPS specialist says she helped a person look for a certain type of work because that is the kind of work he had done in the past: Did you help him explore other options for employment? How did you do that?	Individualized Job Search
Why does the person want to do a _____ job?	Individualized Job Search
Do you include phone contacts on your job development (employer contact) logs?	Job Development— Frequent Employer Contact
If a client makes an employer contact without you, is that contact included in the logs?	Job Development— Frequent Employer Contact
Does your supervisor review your logs with you?	Job Development— Frequent Employer Contact
If you meet with a person who has no hiring authority, but shares excellent information about how people are hired, and what positions are available, is that contact included in your employer contact logs?	Job Development— Frequent Employer Contact
Have you been away from work for a week or longer during the past two months?	Job Development— Frequent Employer Contact
How do you approach an employer for the first time? What do you say? What do you try to accomplish during that first contact? What would happen next?	Job Development— Quality of Employer Contact
Tell me about an employer whom you contacted recently? What was your approach? What happened? Do you have plans to follow up with that employer?	Job Development— Quality of Employer Contact
I noticed that a few people are working at temporary agencies. Can you tell me about the person at Ready Labor? Why did he choose that job? How about the person working at ...?	Competitive Jobs
I noticed that someone is cleaning at a company called Abilities. Is that a job that anyone can apply for?	Competitive Jobs
Sue is volunteering. Please tell me about that.	Competitive Jobs
What is a competitive job?	Competitive Jobs
Has anyone on your caseload started a job within the past month? How often do you meet him? What other types of supports have you offered? Did you talk to the mental health treatment team for their suggestions about job supports? What supports has the mental health treatment team provided?	Individualized Follow-along Supports
What percent of working people uses job supports?	Individualized Follow-along Supports

How do you decide what type of job supports to offer?	Individualized Follow-along Supports
Do you ask for help from the medication prescriber when someone is having problems with symptoms or side effects on the job?	Individualized Follow-along Supports
Is anyone on your caseload going to school? How are you helping?	Individualized Follow-along Supports
Have you ever helped someone quit a job to find a better job? What is an example?	Individualized Follow-along Supports
Have you ever helped someone ask for a promotion or transfer to a more desirable position within his or her company?	Individualized Follow-along Supports
Please tell me about the last couple of people who obtained jobs. How long after they started the job did you have a face-to-face meeting? How did you support that person over the first month of work? Did anyone else provide supports?	Time-unlimited Follow-along Supports
Tell me about the last few working people who were transferred off the IPS team. How long had they been working? Why was it the right time for a transfer? Was each person included in the decision?	Time-unlimited Follow-along Supports
How do you know when it is the right time for someone to transfer off the IPS team?	Time-unlimited Follow-along Supports
Thanks for bringing your appointment book. I was hoping to get a better understanding of your job. Please show me what you did last week. What time did you start work on Monday? Where did you meet the person to start the career profile? What did you do next? What did you do on Tuesday?	Community-based Services
Do some people prefer to meet with you at the office? Is that common? How do you spend the time in the office?	Community-based Services
What do you do when someone begins missing appointments (or misses the first appointment)? Can you give me an example of someone who has not been consistent in keeping appointments with you?	Assertive Engagement and Outreach by Integrated Treatment Team
At what point do you close the person's case?	Assertive Engagement and Outreach by Integrated Treatment Team
Do you document your efforts to reach people who miss appointments?	Assertive Engagement and Outreach by

	Integrated Treatment Team
Have you ever contacted a family member to learn why someone was missing appointments or to ask how to re-connect with the person?	Assertive Engagement and Outreach by Integrated Treatment Team

Sample questions for the IPS supervisor

Questions:	Relates to fidelity item:
Do you keep an updated caseload list for each IPS specialist? If so, would you share that with me?	Caseload Size
Is there a waiting list for the IPS program?	Caseload Size
Why are caseload sizes low? Have you talked to mental health practitioners about the reasons they do not refer more people?	Caseload Size
What are the guidelines for when a person's case should be closed from the IPS program?	Caseload Size
What types of work do the IPS peer specialists do? (Reviewers ask to understand how peers fit in the vocational unit, but they do not lower the score if the peers provide non-employment duties.)	Employment Services Staff
When was the last time that an IPS specialist helped a client with something that was not directly related to school, getting a job or keeping a job?	Employment Services Staff
Are there any specialized positions on the IPS team? Is any one IPS specialist responsible for a particular activity, such as job development?	Vocational Generalists
Does your team ever refer people to other employment programs? Would you share an example of when this happened?	Vocational Generalists
Are the IPS specialists assigned to mental health treatment teams? If so, which specialists work with which teams?	Integration of Rehabilitation with Mental Health Treatment thru Team Assignment
Does the vocational unit receive referrals from other sources than the mental health treatment teams? How many?	Integration of Rehabilitation with Mental Health Treatment thru Team Assignment
How many Vocational Rehabilitation counselors work with people who are on your caseload? How often do you meet with each of these	Collaboration Between

counselors? Where do you meet?	Employment Specialists and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors
How do the Vocational Rehabilitation counselors help people on your caseload?	Collaboration Between Employment Specialists and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors
How does everyone work together with clients to develop the employment plan?	Collaboration Between Employment Specialists and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors
How do IPS specialists work together?	Vocational Unit
How often do you schedule team meetings?	Vocational Unit
What is a typical agenda for a team meeting?	Vocational Unit
What are your responsibilities at the agency? What positions do you supervise? Are you on agency committees? Do you have any other jobs at the agency? Do you carry a caseload? Is it an employment caseload?	Role of Employment Supervisor
How do you use your program outcome data? Are you currently trying to improve any specific outcome? Can you tell me how you are working on that? Do individual IPS specialists have goals for improvement and can you share some examples?	Role of Employment Supervisor
How do new IPS specialists learn about job development? (If the IPS team leader says that she models meeting with employers, ask what happens when they go out together. Also ask if she is using field mentoring logs.) What do you do when a specialist has a low number of job starts?	Role of Employment Supervisor
How do you provide supervision? How often? If it varies by specialist, how does the supervisor decide how much supervision to provide to each specialist?	Role of Employment Supervisor
How do you coordinate IPS with mental health treatment or housing programs? What is your relationship with the other supervisors at the agency? How do you get feedback about the IPS program from other supervisors and staff? How do you hear about changes in services at the agency?	Role of Employment Supervisor

How are clients referred to the IPS program? How long does it take?	Zero Exclusion Criteria
Can anyone make a referral to the program?	Zero Exclusion Criteria
How would any person served by the agency know that he could refer himself to IPS?	Zero Exclusion Criteria
Who should be referred to IPS? Who should not be referred to IPS?	Zero Exclusion Criteria
Have you received any inappropriate referrals over the past few months? If so, please describe.	Zero Exclusion Criteria
Do you have access to the executive leadership at this agency (for example, the executive director, quality assurance director, and medical director) to ask for help with the IPS program? How have they helped? Do they understand the challenges to implementation and sustainability, as well as recent successes?	Executive Team Support for SE
Do you have a steering committee or leadership meeting for IPS? Who participates in the meetings? What has been the focus of the meetings? Are they helpful? How often does the group meet?	Executive Team Support for SE
Is there a fidelity action plan? May we see a copy?	Executive Team Support for SE
Does the executive director prioritize competitive employment for agency clients?	Executive Team Support for SE
How do you train new specialists to talk about disclosure?	Disclosure
What are some important guidelines for IPS specialists to consider when they discuss disclosure with clients?	Disclosure
Do you track the number of people who participate in vocational evaluation or situational assessments?	Ongoing, Work-based Vocational Assessment
Do you track the number of people who volunteer? Why do people volunteer?	Ongoing, Work-based Vocational Assessment
How do IPS specialists gather information to determine ideas for job types and job supports?	Ongoing, Work-based Vocational Assessment
Is anyone in the program working as an intern? What criteria do you use to distinguish internships from volunteer positions?	Ongoing, Work-based Vocational Assessment
Please tell us about the last time that you helped an IPS specialist think about possible good job matches for a job seeker. What suggestions did you make? Why did you think that your suggestions would be appealing to the job seeker?	Individualized Job Search
Have you met most of the people served by the IPS specialists?	Individualized Job Search

Do you know about most of the educational and career training programs in this area? How did you learn about what is available?	Individualized Job Search
Do you review the employer contact logs? How often? How do you know whether the contacts were with someone with hiring authority?	Job Development - Frequent Employer Contact
What is your approach if someone is consistently having difficulty making employer contacts?	Job Development - Frequent Employer Contact
What is the average number of employer contacts that specialists make each week?	Job Development - Frequent Employer Contact
Have any IPS specialists been absent for a week or longer during the past two months?	Job Development - Frequent Employer Contact
How do you know if specialists follow up with employers on multiple occasions?	Job Development - Quality of Employer Contact
Do you help specialists plan which employers they will visit and the purpose of those visits? Please tell us about that.	Job Development - Quality of Employer Contact
What strategies has the team used to increase time in the community?	Community-based Services
What do you do to help specialists if you are concerned they are in the office too much?	Community-based Services
Does the program have a policy about missed appointments?	Assertive Engagement and Outreach by Integrated Treatment Team
At what point should specialists close a person's case if he has been missing appointments?	Assertive Engagement and Outreach by Integrated Treatment Team

Sample questions for mental health practitioners (case managers, service coordinators, counselors, therapists)

Questions:	Relates to fidelity item:
Do IPS specialists ever help you out, for example, taking someone to a doctor's appointment, helping someone with housing, or taking someone to the grocery store? When was the last time? Do they help on a regular basis?	Employment Services Staff

What happens if an IPS specialist and case manager/service coordinator disagree about whether or not a person should quit a job, stop looking for jobs, etc.?	Integration of Rehabilitation with Mental Health Treatment thru Frequent Team Member Contact
Can you remember a time when you (or another case manager/service coordinator) helped the IPS specialist think of a good job match or good job support?	Integration of Rehabilitation with Mental Health Treatment thru Frequent Team Member Contact
Can you think of an example of a time when an IPS specialist or peer specialist suggested work for a person who had not yet been referred to the IPS program?	Integration of Rehabilitation with Mental Health Treatment thru Frequent Team Member Contact
Does the IPS supervisor ever come to your mental health team meeting? How is that helpful? When was the last time?	Role of Employment Supervisor
When is the right time to talk to someone about work?	Zero Exclusion Criteria
When would you <i>not</i> recommend a competitive job to someone?	Zero Exclusion Criteria
Are there times when a person needs to develop prevocational skills before engaging with the IPS program? Are there programs that help people develop those skills? How often have you referred to those programs in the past six months?	Zero Exclusion Criteria
Do you ever worry that a job could worsen a person's substance abuse problem by providing more income? How do you approach this issue?	Zero Exclusion Criteria
What do you do if you are working with a person who has poor hygiene, but says that he wants a job?	Zero Exclusion Criteria
What is your strategy for working with someone who says he is interested in a job but does not take medicine on a regular basis?	Zero Exclusion Criteria
Do you ever suggest work for people who are in their fifties, sixties, or older?	Zero Exclusion Criteria
What leads you to have discussions about employment with people?	Zero Exclusion Criteria
Have you ever worked with someone who was homeless but wanted to get a job?	Zero Exclusion Criteria
Has there ever been a time when you suggested that someone stop focusing on employment so that he or she could work on treatment issues? Please describe.	Zero Exclusion Criteria
How many people on your caseload are in the IPS program?	Zero Exclusion

	Criteria
If the program has a waiting list: Have you continued to make referrals?	Zero Exclusion Criteria
Who on your caseload is interested in work? Have you referred those people?	Zero Exclusion Criteria
How do you define competitive employment?	Agency Focus on Competitive Employment
How many people with serious mental illness served by this agency have competitive jobs?	Agency Focus on Competitive Employment
Have working people had opportunities to share their stories (newsletters, speaking at events or treatment groups, etc.)?	Agency Focus on Competitive Employment
When you are working on the annual assessment (or treatment plan) what do you do if someone says he wants to work? What do you do if he says he isn't sure he wants to work?	Agency Focus on Competitive Employment
What is the current rate of competitive employment for persons with serious mental illness at your agency?	Agency Focus on Competitive Employment
Does the executive director think that employment is a critical component of services at this agency? What gives you that impression?	Executive Team Support for SE
What is the difference between "competitive employment" and other types of employment?	Executive Team Support for SE
When a working person transitions from the IPS program, what do you do when her income changes? Can you refer the person to benefits counseling? Have you ever done so?	Work Incentives Planning
Do most people in the IPS program get good information about how their benefits would be affected by earned income?	Work Incentives Planning
Where do you usually find the IPS specialist when you need him?	Community-based Services
If a person misses appointments with the IPS specialist, what do you do?	Assertive Engagement and Outreach by Integrated Treatment Team
How do you help people connect to the IPS specialist for the first time?	Assertive Engagement and Outreach by Integrated Treatment Team

Sample questions for medication prescribers or medical directors

Questions:	Relates to fidelity item:
When is the right time to talk to someone about work?	Zero Exclusion Criteria
When would you <i>not</i> recommend a competitive job to someone?	Zero Exclusion Criteria
Are there times when a person needs to develop prevocational skills before engaging with the IPS program? Are there programs that help people develop those skills? How often have you referred to those programs in the past six months?	Zero Exclusion Criteria
Do you ever worry that a job could worsen a person's substance abuse problem by providing more income? How do you approach this issue?	Zero Exclusion Criteria
What do you do if you are working with a person who has poor hygiene, but says that he wants a job?	Zero Exclusion Criteria
What is your strategy for working with someone who says he is interested in a job but does not take medicine on a regular basis?	Zero Exclusion Criteria
Do you ever suggest work for people who are in their fifties, sixties, or older?	Zero Exclusion Criteria
What leads you to have discussions about employment with people?	Zero Exclusion Criteria
Have you ever worked with someone who was homeless but wanted to get a job?	Zero Exclusion Criteria
Has there ever been a time when you suggested that someone stop focusing on employment so that he or she could work on treatment issues? Please describe.	Zero Exclusion Criteria
How many people on your caseload are in the IPS program?	Zero Exclusion Criteria
If the program has a waiting list: Have you continued to make referrals?	Zero Exclusion Criteria
Who on your caseload is interested in work? Have you referred those people?	Zero Exclusion Criteria

Sample questions for a mental health supervisor or clinical director

Questions:	Relates to fidelity item:
Are the mental health practitioners organized into teams? If so, please describe the teams.	Integration of Rehabilitation and Mental Health thru

	Team Assignment
What happens if an IPS specialist and case manager disagree about whether or not a person should quit a job, stop looking for jobs, etc.?	Integration of Rehabilitation and Mental Health thru Frequent Team Member Contact
Can you remember a time when you (or another case manager/service coordinator) helped the IPS specialist think of a good job match or good job support?	Integration of Rehabilitation and Mental Health thru Frequent Team Member Contact
Can you think of an example of a time when an IPS specialist or peer specialist suggested work for a person who had not yet been referred to the IPS program?	Integration of Rehabilitation and Mental Health thru Frequent Team Member Contact
Do you know how many people are working on each practitioner's caseload?	Zero Exclusion Criteria
How do you supervise mental health practitioners who do not have many clients who work?	Zero Exclusion Criteria

**Sample questions for IPS peer specialists
(peer specialists who are part of the IPS team)**

Questions:	Relates to fidelity item:
Please describe your duties. How are your duties different from the IPS specialist's?	Employment Services Staff
What IPS services do you provide? Does anyone else provide those services?	Vocational Generalists
When would a person work with you alone, and not with an IPS specialist at the same time?	Vocational Generalists
Do you attend mental health treatment team meetings? Which ones? How often? Do you stay for the entire meeting? (The score is not affected by peers attending or not attending mental health treatment team meetings but reviewers may recommend that they attend weekly for better integration of services.	Integration of Rehabilitation with Mental Health Treatment thru Frequent Team Member Contact
Do mental health practitioners share ideas for what may help a person with her career goals?	Integration of Rehabilitation with Mental Health Treatment thru Frequent Team

	Member Contact
What is your role in the mental health treatment team meetings?	Integration of Rehabilitation with Mental Health Treatment thru Frequent Team Member Contact
How do you help practitioners remember to talk about work with their clients? Do you ever suggest work for people who are unemployed? (If peers recommend work for people who are unemployed, reviewers give credit for that component.)	Integration of Rehabilitation with Mental Health Treatment thru Frequent Team Member Contact
Do you participate in meetings with Vocational Rehabilitation counselors?	Collaboration Between Employment Specialists and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors
How do the Vocational Rehabilitation counselors help people on the IPS team?	Collaboration Between Employment Specialists and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors
How does everyone work together with clients to develop the employment plan?	Collaboration Between Employment Specialists and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors
Was the meeting that we observed today a typical meeting?	Vocational Unit
Do you provide coverage when an IPS specialist is away or has a scheduling conflict? (This may improve the score, for example, if there is only one IPS specialist but the peer specialist is able to provide back up.)	Vocational Unit
Are the meetings strengths-based? Why or why not? (This information may also pertain to items Individualized Job Search, Individualized Follow-along Supports, Zero Exclusion Criteria, or Ongoing, Work-based Vocational Assessment.)	Vocational Unit
Do you receive information about outcomes for the IPS program?	Role of Employment

How do you receive that information? Does the program have goals to improve any outcomes?	Supervisor
What goals have you and your supervisor set for your own performance? (If the peer specialist does not have goals for performance improvement, reviewers may still give credit for that component, but they may also recommend that the supervisor helps the peer set and achieve goals, just like his team members.)	Role of Employment Supervisor
Are there any restrictions for who can be referred to the IPS program?	Zero Exclusion Criteria
Who can refer a person to IPS? Can people refer themselves? Does any person who receives treatment for serious mental illness know how to refer himself?	Zero Exclusion Criteria
Who should be referred to IPS? Who should not be referred to IPS?	Zero Exclusion Criteria
What could be done to improve adherence to zero exclusion criteria at this agency?	Zero Exclusion Criteria
What can be done to raise awareness about the importance of employment among practitioners? (The purpose of asking is that peers may have good suggestions to share in the report. Reviewers do not ask in order to alter the final score.)	Agency Focus on Competitive Employment
How do clients learn about IPS services? What would be better strategies to advertise IPS?	Agency Focus on Competitive Employment
Do you ever accompany people to appointments with benefits planners? Is the information clear and comprehensive?	Work Incentives Planning
Do most people in the IPS program receive benefits planning?	Work Incentives Planning
What would improve benefits planning?	Work Incentives Planning
Does the benefits planner give people written information to refer to later? Is it helpful information?	Work Incentives Planning
Do you ever help people consider whether to disclose a disability or not? What do you say in those discussions? What would you say to someone who is unsure whether or not to disclose to potential employers?	Disclosure
Do you ever suggest assessments to help people prepare for the right job, or to determine if someone is ready for work? Does anyone at the agency ever make those suggestions?	Ongoing Work-based Vocational Assessment
Do you help people consider what jobs are good matches?	Individualized Job Search
Does anyone ever have unrealistic job preferences? What do you do in those situations?	Individualized Job Search
Do you ever help people explore new options for employment other	Individualized Job

than the types of jobs they have had in the past? Please tell me about that.	Search
What is a competitive job? What other types of jobs are people working? Do you ever suggest jobs that are not competitive?	Competitive Jobs
I noticed that someone is cleaning at a company called Abilities. Is that a job that anyone can apply for?	Competitive Jobs
Do you provide job supports? What type of supports? Are you providing job supports for anyone now? What supports do you provide?	Individualized Follow-along Supports
Do you provide educational supports? What type of supports?	Individualized Follow-along Supports
Do you encourage people to consider career support plans?	Individualized Follow-along Supports
Do mental health practitioners suggest job or educational supports for individuals?	Individualized Follow-along Supports
Please tell me about someone who was offered a job within the past couple of months. What types of supports has that person received?	Time-unlimited Follow-along Supports
Please tell me about a working person who was recently transferred off the IPS team. Why was he transferred? How long had he been working? Was it the right time for him to discontinue IPS services?	Time-unlimited Follow-along Supports
What do you do when someone misses appointments with you?	Assertive Engagement and Outreach by Integrated Treatment Team
When would someone's IPS case be closed due to missed appointments?	Assertive Engagement and Outreach by Integrated Treatment Team

Sample questions for people using IPS services (clients)

Questions:	Relates to fidelity item:
Who was the first person you met from the IPS program? Who helped you find a job?	Vocational Generalists
Who provided job supports? Who helped you select a career? Who helped with education or training?	Vocational Generalists

Do you remember when someone at this agency asked if you were interested in employment? Was that the right time? Would you have been interested in hearing about work at an earlier time?	Zero Exclusion Criteria
How did you learn about the IPS program?	Zero Exclusion Criteria
Did you go to a different employment program before meeting with (name of employment specialist)? How did you learn about that program? How did you decide to start that program?	Zero Exclusion Criteria
Has anyone ever suggested that you should hold off on work?	Zero Exclusion Criteria
Did anyone ask if you would be interested in learning how your benefits would be affected by a return to work? What happened next?	Work Incentives Planning
Did the person who gave information about benefits talk to you about all the sources of income that you have? For example, Social Security, food stamps, or housing assistance? Did she ask about the amount of money that you receive from each source?	Work Incentives Planning
Did the person who gave you information provide any examples? For instance, did he tell you what would happen if you worked part time or full time?	Work Incentives Planning
Did the information help you? Was it understandable?	Work Incentives Planning
After the appointment, did you receive a report to help you remember the details? Was the report specific to you and the benefits that you receive, or was it a list of rules that apply to everyone who gets benefits?	Work Incentives Planning
Did anyone tell you how to report your earnings after you went back to work? Did she tell you how to do that for each source of income?	Work Incentives Planning
Did anyone help you report your earnings to Social Security Administration or other entitlement systems? Would you have wanted help?	Work Incentives Planning
Does your IPS specialist talk to employers on your behalf—to advocate for them to hire you? Were you asked if you wanted the specialist to do that?	Disclosure
Do you remember talking to your employment specialist about disclosure—letting employers know that you get services from ABC mental health agency? What do you remember about that conversation?	Disclosure
Does your IPS specialist have contact with your employer now? How did you decide that you did (or didn't) want your specialist to talk to your employer?	Disclosure
When you first met the IPS specialist, what did you talk about? What	Ongoing Work-based

happened after that first meeting?	Vocational Assessment
Were you asked to do any vocational testing or participate in a job tryout?	Ongoing, Work-based Vocational Assessment
After you first met with the IPS specialist, about how long was it before you started contacting employers about a job? If it was more than a month, what slowed things down? Was that the right pace for you?	Rapid Job Search for Competitive Jobs
How did you decide to apply for (the job you just applied for OR the job you have)?	Individualized Job Search
What types of jobs are you and your IPS specialist looking for? Why do you think that type of job is right for you?	Individualized Job Search
What type of job would you enjoy?	Individualized Job Search
What are your strengths and skills? How do those pertain to the jobs you are seeking (or the job you have)?	Individualized Job Search
How does the employment specialist help with finding jobs?	Job Development - Quality of Employer Contact
Why did you choose a volunteer job? Would you have preferred to work at a paying job? Did anyone offer you help with a paying job?	Competitive Jobs
How do you like your job at the temporary agency? Is that the type of work that you were hoping for?	Competitive Jobs
For those of you who have a job now, is it a time-limited position or can you keep it as long as your employer is satisfied with your work?	Competitive Jobs
Has anyone asked you about your long-term career goals?	Competitive Jobs
How does your employment specialist help you with your job? Is that the kind of help that you need or want?	Individualized Follow-along Supports
How does your case manager/service coordinator or therapist help you with your job?	Individualized Follow-along Supports
Has anyone offered to help you with your long-term career goals?	Individualized Follow-along Supports
How did your IPS specialist help you select your education/technical training program? What supports did he provide while you were in school or training?	Individualized Follow-along Supports
Have you ever had a problem with your job? How did your employment specialist help?	Individualized Follow-along Supports
When did you start your job?	Time-unlimited

	Follow-along Supports
How often do you meet with the employment specialist?	Time-unlimited Follow-along Supports
Do you meet in person or by phone?	Time-unlimited Follow-along Supports
Where do you usually meet with your employment specialist?	Community-based Services
Where do you prefer to meet with your employment specialist?	Community-based Services

Sample question for family members

Questions:	Relates to fidelity item:
How quickly did the employment specialist help your family member connect with employers?	Rapid Job Search for Competitive Jobs
Do you know what determined the timing for starting the job search?	Rapid Job Search for Competitive Jobs
Please tell me about the job your family member has (or is seeking). Is that the right position for him? Why or why not? What position would be a better match?	Individualized Job Search
What type of job or educational supports has the IPS specialist provided to your family member? Are those the right supports? Why or why not?	Individualized Follow-along Supports
Where does the specialist usually meet with your family member?	Community-based Services

Sample questions for state Vocational Rehabilitation counselors

Questions:	Relates to fidelity item:
How often do you meet with the IPS specialists? In what context?	Collaboration Between Employment Specialists and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors
How does everyone work together with clients to develop the	Collaboration

employment plan?	Between Employment Specialists and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors
How can collaboration be improved?	Collaboration Between Employment Specialists and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors
How do people receive information about working and benefits? Is this service available for all of the people who need it? Do clients receive helpful information that is specific to their individual situations?	Work Incentives Planning
Do you ever suggest a vocational evaluation or situational assessment for someone? Under what circumstances would you do that? How often?	Ongoing, Work-based Vocational Assessment
Do the IPS specialists help your clients search for positions that are related to their preferences, skills, and needs?	Individualized Job Search
Please tell me about someone who needed a very specific type of job. How did you and the specialist help the person find the right position?	Individualized Job Search
Do the IPS specialists know about a wide range of job types available in this community? Do they know about most of the educational and career training programs in the area?	Individualized Job Search
Are you able to help with educational and career training goals?	Individualized Job Search
What types of job supports do IPS specialists provide to working people? Can you provide a recent example of supports provided to someone who is working?	Individualized Follow-along Supports
Do you believe that the supports are individualized to each person's preferences and needs?	Individualized Follow-along Supports
Do you help develop job support plans?	Individualized Follow-along Supports

Sample questions for agency leaders/executive team members

Questions:	Relates to fidelity item:
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Is the IPS program able to serve most of the people who want to work at your agency?	Zero Exclusion Criteria
When you measure the rate of competitive employment for clients, which people are included?	Agency Focus on Competitive Employment
How do you define competitive employment?	Agency Focus on Competitive Employment
How is information about competitive employment collected? How often?	Agency Focus on Competitive Employment
How is information about the rate of competitive employment shared with staff?	Agency Focus on Competitive Employment
Since the last fidelity review, have there been opportunities for people to share their back-to-work stories with other clients and staff? Please describe.	Agency Focus on Competitive Employment
Do you collect information about other types of employment (e.g., sheltered jobs, jobs set aside for people with disabilities)? Are those types of jobs separated from competitive employment?	Agency Focus on Competitive Employment
How many people with serious mental illness have competitive jobs? Are there goals to increase this number?	Agency Focus on Competitive Employment
Executive director and clinical director: Please describe the IPS program. How is IPS different than other employment programs? (If either of those people defers to the IPS supervisor or another person to answer, reviewers should redirect their questions to the executive director and clinical director.)	Executive Team Support for SE
What changes have you made in order to improve fidelity to supported employment? What changes will you make in the future?	Executive Team Support for SE
(To the executive director): Have there been opportunities for you to talk to agency staff about IPS supported employment? How do you share your goals for competitive employment? (Reviewers: if others attempt to answer for the executive director about what he or she has done, address your question to the executive director again).	Executive Team Support for SE
(To the executive director): Do you ever talk directly with the IPS supervisor?	Executive Team Support for SE
Is fidelity part of the quality assurance process? For example, does the quality assurance process monitor fidelity scores? Does the quality assurance process include client outcomes for IPS supported employment? May we review a recent quality assurance report (or to see the section of the report related to IPS)?	Executive Team Support for SE
Do you have an IPS steering committee or leadership committee? Who participates in the meetings? What has been the focus of the	Executive Team Support for SE

meetings? How often does the group meet? Does anyone from the executive team participate in the steering committee?	
How does the IPS supervisor share information about the program with the executive team? How has the executive team helped with program implementation or sustainability?	Executive Team Support for SE
Describe the relationship between state Vocational Rehabilitation counselors and IPS practitioners? Has the executive team been able to help build a stronger partnership?	Executive Team Support for SE

Sample questions for the work incentives planner

Questions:	Relates to fidelity item:
Do you provide information regarding benefits other than Social Security? For instance, if someone receives veteran’s benefits, can you help that person? If a person has a spouse or dependent who also receives benefits, can you provide good information about how her earnings would affect other people in the family? Can you provide information about housing subsidies? Food stamps?	Work Incentives Planning
How did you receive training in work incentives? Have you participated in training (or have you received updates) during the past year? Please describe.	Work Incentives Planning
Do you provide people with written information about their personal situations? Would it be possible to see a sample report?	Work Incentives Planning
Do you meet with people in person or by phone?	Work Incentives Planning
Are you able to tell people how their total income will be affected by part or full-time work? Can you provide individualized information or do you provide information about work incentive rules?	Work Incentives Planning
When someone is referred to you, how long is it before the person meets with you?	Work Incentives Planning

Data Collection and Quality Improvement Processes for Good IPS Fidelity

Fidelity Item	Data Collection or Quality Improvement Process	Frequency
<input type="checkbox"/> Integration of rehabilitation with mental health treatment: Employment services documentation is integrated into mental health treatment records.	Minimally, the career profile, progress notes and employment plan are part of the mental health treatment record.	For each person served by the IPS program
<input type="checkbox"/> Role of the IPS Supervisor: Supervisor collects client outcomes, reviews outcomes with staff, and helps them develop goals for improvement.	Examples of data collected by supervisor include number of job starts for the program and for individual specialists, number/percent of people in educational programs, and number/percent of working people for the team and for individual specialists.	Quarterly
<input type="checkbox"/> Agency focus on competitive employment: Rate of competitive employment for all persons with serious mental illness served by the agency. This includes those who are not served by the IPS program.	Mental health agency leaders collect employment data and share outcomes with mental health supervisors and practitioners. They count any person with serious mental illnesses (or the target group) who worked during the quarter, even if the person only worked only one day.	Quarterly
<input type="checkbox"/> Agency focus on competitive employment: Agency intake includes questions about employment.	When people begin receiving services at the agency they are asked about their interest in employment. Work history information is not sufficient. Sample questions: What are your thoughts about working? Would you like to learn whether your disability benefits would be affected by a job? Would you like to learn about a program that helps people return to work? Answers are documented in agency intake or initial assessment.	For each person with serious mental illness (or other target group) who receives services at the mental health

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agency focus on competitive employment:
People are asked about interest in work on an ongoing basis. | Questions about interest in employment (see above) are included on a client form that is administered annually. | agency
Annually or more often |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Executive team support for supported employment:
Quality assurance review of IPS supported employment fidelity | The agency quality assurance process reviews the overall IPS fidelity score or scores for specific fidelity items in order to improve fidelity. | Every six months until good fidelity is obtained, annually thereafter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing work-based vocational assessment:
Employment specialists spend a few weeks learning about each person’s work goals, education and work experiences, etc. They document this in the career profile. | The career profile is updated with each job start, job end and educational experience. Sample forms to update the profile are at www.dartmouthips.org/resources/programs/program-tools
People who contribute information to the profile include the job seeker or student, mental health practitioners, and (with permission) family members, past employers and educators. | For each person served by the IPS program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rapid job search: Number of days from first IPS appointment to first face-to-face employer contact by employment specialist and/or client | Some supervisors collect data by asking for information during the weekly vocational unit meeting: “Who met with a new client for the first time this week?” “Who started a job search this week by either you or they having in person contact with an employer (or educator)?” “Did anyone who is engaged in education decide to begin a job search?” | For each client in the IPS program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individualized job search:
Employment specialists and clients co-develop individualized, written employment plans. | Employment plans are individualized (pertain to each person’s preferences and needs regarding a job) and specific (spell out the steps to find a job and who will complete each step). Sample job search plans are at www.dartmouthips.org/resources/programs/program-tools | For each person served by the IPS program |

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Job development - Frequent employer contact: Employment specialists have six in-person contacts with employers (related to job development) each week. | Employment (IPS) specialists document employer contacts on logs that are submitted to their supervisor weekly. The logs indicate whether the specialist met with someone who had hiring authority. Also, logs indicate that the activity was related to helping someone find a job, rather than providing job supports or another purpose. | Weekly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diversity of jobs and diversity of employers: Supervisors maintain a list of job starts that includes job titles. | Many IPS programs use Job Start Forms to update the Career Profile (www.dartmouthips.org/resources/programs/program-tools). Employment specialists provide a copy to the supervisor when a person begins work. Supervisors track the first date of employment, job title and name of employer. If the business is a franchise (such as a fast food restaurant or grocery store chain) supervisors might also indicate when clients are working at separate stores. | For each job start |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individualized follow-along supports: Employment specialists and clients co-develop individualized, written employment plans. | Written job support plans are individualized to each person's preferences for supports and needs (i.e., based on work history, current issues, etc.). The plans indicate what services will be provided and how often. | For each person served by the IPS program |

Recommended but not required:

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Role of the IPS supervisor: Mentoring (working side-by-side with employment specialists) for developing employer relationships | Sample field mentoring forms are at www.dartmouthips.org/resources/programs/tools-for-supervision/ | For each new specialist and for those who want to improve their job development skills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work incentives planning: Documentation provided by a benefits trainer regarding a | Employment specialists request a copy of the report provided to the client, provided that it is individualized and not a copy of entitlement rules. | For each person who receives work incentives planning |

person's individualized situation is included in the employment record.

(benefits planning)

- **Disclosure:** Employment specialists discuss each person's preferences regarding disclosure of a disability to employers.

Forms to document these discussions include the career profile and plan to approach employers (disclosure worksheet). Sample forms are at <http://www.dartmouthips.org/resources/programs/program-tools/>

For each job search

SAMPLE PROGRAM FORMS

As fidelity tools are updated, the new versions are available at
www.DartmouthIPS.org.

Career Profile
IPS Supported Employment/Education Referral

Face Sheet

Date of referral: Click here to enter text.

Name: Click here to enter text.
Address: Click here to enter text.
Email: Click here to enter text.
Phone number/s: Click here to enter text.
Best way to reach: Click here to enter text.

Case Manager/therapist: Click here to enter text.
State Vocational Rehabilitation counselor: Click here to enter text.
 Referral sent to State Vocational Rehabilitation
Other healthcare/social service providers: Click here to enter text.

What is the person saying about work? Why does s/he want to work now? What type of job?
Click here to enter text.

.....

Is this person interested in gaining more education now to advance his/her career goals?
Click here to enter text.

.....

Please include some information about the person's illness (diagnosis, symptoms, etc.). How might the person's illness (and/or substance use) affect a job or return to school?
Click here to enter text.

.....

What are some of the person's strengths? (Experience, training, personality, supports, etc.)
Click here to enter text.

.....

What job (type of job, hours, etc.) do you think would be a good match?
Click here to enter text.

.....

Person making referral

Title

Career Profile

This form is to be completed by the employment/education specialist during the first few weeks of meeting with someone. Sources of information include: the person, the mental health treatment team, client records, and with permission, family members and previous employers. The profile should be updated with each new job and education experience using job start, job end, and education experience forms.

Work Goal

What is your dream job? What kind of work have you always wanted to do?

Click here to enter text.

What are your long-term career goals?

Click here to enter text.

What type of job do you think you would like to have now?

Click here to enter text.

What is it that appeals to you about that type of work?

Click here to enter text.

What type of job(s) do you know that you would not want?

Click here to enter text.

Do you know people who are working? What types of jobs? What do you think about those jobs?

Click here to enter text.

Is there anything that worries you about going to work? Why do you want to work?

Click here to enter text.

Education

Are you interested in going to school or attending vocational training now to advance your work career?

Click here to enter text.

Education/learning history

Did you complete high school?

No

Yes

If no, would you be interested in earning your GED/high school equivalency diploma?

No

Yes

N/A

Did you participate in vocational training classes in high school?

No

Yes

Have you ever completed an apprenticeship (i.e., plumbing, welding, electrician, etc.)?

No

Yes

If so, what year? [Click here to enter text.](#)

Did you complete any job related job-related training in the military?

No

Yes

N/A

Please describe the training, including years and any certificates earned. [Click here to enter text.](#)

Other education or training programs

N/A

Name of Educational/ Training Institution: [Click here to enter text.](#)

City/State: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Years attended: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Type of degree or certificate sought: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Degrees, certificates, or classes completed: [Click here to enter text.](#)

If program was not completed, why not? [Click here to enter text.](#)

Liked most about the program: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Liked least about the program: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Type of financial aid used, if any: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Name of Educational/ Training Institution: [Click here to enter text.](#)

City/State: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Years attended: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Type of degree or certificate sought: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Degrees, certificates, or classes completed: [Click here to enter text.](#)

If program was not completed, why not? [Click here to enter text.](#)

Liked most about the program: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Liked least about the program: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Type of financial aid used, if any: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Name of Educational/ Training Institution: [Click here to enter text.](#)

City/State: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Years attended: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Type of degree or certificate sought: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Degrees, certificates, or classes completed: [Click here to enter text.](#)

If program was not completed, why not? [Click here to enter text.](#)

Liked most about the program: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Liked least about the program: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Type of financial aid used, if any: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Do you have copies of the degrees, licenses, certificates that you have earned?

No

Yes

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Are you interested in earning a specific certificate, license, or degree for work?

No

Yes

[Click here to enter text.](#)

If the individual is not interested in additional schooling or technical training now, skip the next set of questions and ask about work history instead.

What type of job are you interested in obtaining?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Do you know of a specific training/education program you would like to pursue?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

What is it about that field that interests you?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Do you know about the availability of those jobs in this area? What is the occupational outlook for those jobs?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

When would you like to start an educational or training program?
Click here to enter text.

How long do you want to go to a school or training program? What is your timeframe for completing education or training?
Click here to enter text.

Would you be interested in visiting some local programs (community college, four-year college, adult vocational training) to learn about different options for degrees and certificates?
Click here to enter text.

Are you interested in joining a trade union (e.g., baker's, maintenance)? Do you know the requirements for joining? Would you like to visit the union office to learn more?
Click here to enter text.

Are there any other job training or educational opportunities that you would like to learn more about?
Click here to enter text.

School Experiences

Let's talk about some of your school experiences and how they were for you.

			Comments (include comments for any area that was a problem or a particular strength)
Being called on in class	<input type="checkbox"/> Okay	<input type="checkbox"/> Problem	Click here to enter text.
Social situations	<input type="checkbox"/> Okay	<input type="checkbox"/> Problem	Click here to enter text.
Taking tests	<input type="checkbox"/> Okay	<input type="checkbox"/> Problem	Click here to enter text.
Learning from lecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Okay	<input type="checkbox"/> Problem	Click here to enter text.
Learning by reading	<input type="checkbox"/> Okay	<input type="checkbox"/> Problem	Click here to enter text.
Learning hands on	<input type="checkbox"/> Okay	<input type="checkbox"/> Problem	Click here to enter text.
Concentration	<input type="checkbox"/> Okay	<input type="checkbox"/> Problem	Click here to enter text.
Memory	<input type="checkbox"/> Okay	<input type="checkbox"/> Problem	Click here to enter text.
Using computers	<input type="checkbox"/> Okay	<input type="checkbox"/> Problem	Click here to enter text.

Did you have an IEP (individual education plan) while you were in school? Did that include different strategies to help you learn? What were those?
Click here to enter text.

Were you in any advanced classes? Which ones?
Click here to enter text.

Has anyone ever told you that you had a learning disability? What do you know about that?
What accommodations have helped you in the past?
Click here to enter text.

What are your strengths related to being a student?
Click here to enter text.

What languages do you know?
Click here to enter text.

Plans for School and Training

What do you need in order to start school?

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Access to a computer | <input type="checkbox"/> Computer literacy | <input type="checkbox"/> Quiet place to study | <input type="checkbox"/> Transit card |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial aid | <input type="checkbox"/> Books/ supplies | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health support | <input type="checkbox"/> Eldercare |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Help with transit route | <input type="checkbox"/> Help studying | <input type="checkbox"/> Help with a study calendar | <input type="checkbox"/> Childcare |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Help navigating campus | <input type="checkbox"/> More support from family/friends | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Help talking to teachers/instructors | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: Click here to enter text. | | |

Comments: Click here to enter text.

What are your resources for paying for school tuition? For books? For other school costs?
Click here to enter text.

Have you ever received financial aid for school? Have you ever had a grant? What type? Have you ever defaulted on a grant or student loan?
Click here to enter text.

Do you need any type of classroom accommodations?
Click here to enter text.

What other types of supports may help you succeed in school or training?
Click here to enter text.

Work Experience

Most recent job

N/A – Person has no work experience

Job title: Click here to enter text.
Employer: Click here to enter text.
Job duties: Click here to enter text.
Start Date: Click here to enter text. End Date: Click here to enter text.
How many hours per week: Click here to enter text.
How did you find this job? Click here to enter text.
What did you like about job? Click here to enter text.
What did you dislike? Click here to enter text.
What was your supervisor like? Your co-workers? Click here to enter text.
Reason for leaving job? Click here to enter text.
Other info about job: Click here to enter text.

Next most recent job

N/A – Person has only had one job

Job title: Click here to enter text.
Employer: Click here to enter text.
Job duties: Click here to enter text.
Start Date: Click here to enter text. End Date: Click here to enter text.
How many hours per week: Click here to enter text.
How did you find this job? Click here to enter text.
What did you like about job? Click here to enter text.
What did you dislike? Click here to enter text.
What was your supervisor like? Your co-workers? Click here to enter text.
Reason for leaving job? Click here to enter text.
Other info about job: Click here to enter text.

Next most recent job

N/A – Person has only had two jobs

Job title: Click here to enter text.
Employer: Click here to enter text.

Job duties: Click here to enter text.
Start Date: Click here to enter text. End Date: Click here to enter text.
How many hours per week: Click here to enter text.
How did you find this job? Click here to enter text.
What did you like about job? Click here to enter text.
What did you dislike? Click here to enter text.
What was your supervisor like? Your co-workers? Click here to enter text.
Reason for leaving job? Click here to enter text.
Other info about job: Click here to enter text.

Please use additional sheets for other jobs.

Military Experience

Not applicable because person was not in the military

Branch: Click here to enter text.
Dates: Click here to enter text.
Training or work experience: Click here to enter text.
Certificate or license: Click here to enter text.

Cultural Background

Use the following script to introduce the next set of questions to the person.
“Our agency aims to work with people from different backgrounds and with diverse experiences. The next set of questions will help me understand your background and culture, which may help us in planning for jobs.”

What is important to you in terms of your background and culture? (i.e., race, ethnicity, color, gender, economic status, etc.)
Click here to enter text.

Which different languages do you speak? Which language do you prefer?
Click here to enter text.

What special events or holidays do you celebrate? Are there family traditions that you still practice? How would you like your family involved as we move forward in the process of getting and keeping a job?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Is it important to you whether your work supervisor is male or female?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Have you ever felt discriminated against or treated unfairly when you were looking for work or on the job? Could you tell me about that?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Mental Health

Has anyone ever told you that you have a mental illness? If so, what did they say?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

How does your mental illness affect you?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

What are the first signs that you may be experiencing a symptom flare-up?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

How do you cope with your symptoms?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

What medicines do you take and when do you take them?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

How do the medicines work for you?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Physical Health

How is your physical health? Do you have any health problems?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Do you have any problems with the following:

Standing for long periods

No

Yes

Can you stand for more than an hour?

No

Yes

Sitting No Yes
How long can you sit? [Click here to enter text.](#)

Climbing stairs? No Yes
How many flights? How often? [Click here to enter text.](#)

Lifting No Yes
How much can you lift? [Click here to enter text.](#)

Endurance No Yes
How many hours could you work each day? [Click here to enter text.](#)

Each week? [Click here to enter text.](#)

What is the best time of day for you?
[Click here to enter text.](#)

Cognitive Health

Do you have problems with memory?
[Click here to enter text.](#)

Concentrating?
[Click here to enter text.](#)

Doing things fast (psychomotor speed)?
[Click here to enter text.](#)

If so, what things have helped with these issues in the past?
[Click here to enter text.](#)

Getting Ready for a Job

Do you have the clothes you will need for a job? For interviews?
[Click here to enter text.](#)

Do you have an alarm clock or way to wake up for work?
[Click here to enter text.](#)

Do you have two forms of identification? Picture ID, social security card...?
[Click here to enter text.](#)

How will you get to work?
Click here to enter text.

Interpersonal Skills

Would you like a job that involved working with the public?
Click here to enter text.

Where do you live and with whom do you live?
Click here to enter text.

Who do you spend time with? How often do you see or talk to them?
Click here to enter text.

Who can help us think about jobs you would enjoy?
Click here to enter text.

- Appointment made with this person to discuss jobs.
If not, why? Click here to enter text.
-

Once you are employed, who would be a good person to support you?
Click here to enter text.

Anyone else?
Click here to enter text.

Benefits

Do you receive any of the following benefits?

- SSI SSDI Housing Subsidy Food Stamps TANF
 Retirement from previous job VA benefits (combat related? Yes)
 Spouse or dependent child receives benefits
 Medicaid Medicare Other benefits: Click here to enter text.
 Unsure which benefits s/he receives
 No benefits
-

Do you manage your own money?
Click here to enter text.

Referral made to benefits planner.
If no referral, why not: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Disclosure

(or use “Plan for Approaching Employers” Worksheet)

Please explain that each person using supported employment services can decide whether or not their specialist will contact employers on their behalf.

What could be some of the advantages of having an employment specialist contact employers on your behalf?
[Click here to enter text.](#)

What could be some of the disadvantages?
[Click here to enter text.](#)

Are there any things that you would **not** want your employment specialist to share with an employer?
[Click here to enter text.](#)

Do you know whether or not you would like your specialist to go ahead and contact employers on your behalf? (It is okay to change your mind at any time):
[Click here to enter text.](#)

If you decided that the specialist should not contact employers, what things would you like him or her to do in order to help you find a job?

- Help with job leads Help filling out applications Help writing a resume
 Rides to job interviews Practicing job interview questions and answers
 Help following up on applications Other: [Click here to enter text.](#)
-

Substance Use

How much alcohol do you drink?
[Click here to enter text.](#)

How often?
[Click here to enter text.](#)

Is there a particular time of day?
[Click here to enter text.](#)

What drugs do you, or have you, used?
Click here to enter text.

How often?
Click here to enter text.

Legal History

Have you ever been arrested?
Click here to enter text.

Have you ever been convicted of a crime?
Click here to enter text.

Conviction 1:	Year:	Click here to enter text.
Click here to enter text.	Sentence:	Click here to enter text.

Conviction 2:	Year:	Click here to enter text.
Click here to enter text.	Sentence:	Click here to enter text.

Conviction 3:	Year:	Click here to enter text.
Click here to enter text.	Sentence:	Click here to enter text.

Conviction 4:	Year:	Click here to enter text.
Click here to enter text.	Sentence:	Click here to enter text.

Conviction 5:	Year:	Click here to enter text.
Click here to enter text.	Sentence:	Click here to enter text.

Conviction 6:	Year:	Click here to enter text.
Click here to enter text.	Sentence:	Click here to enter text.

What problems, if any, were you having in your life at the time of the offenses?	Click here to enter text.
--	---------------------------

Do you have any pending legal charges? If so, what charge?	Click here to enter text.
--	---------------------------

Parole Officer name: Click here to enter text.	PO phone number: Click here to enter text.
--	--

Do you have a copy of your rap sheet?	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
---------------------------------------	-----------------------------	------------------------------

Do you want to get a copy of it?	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
----------------------------------	-----------------------------	------------------------------

Daily Activity

What is a typical day like for you from the time you get up until you go to bed?

Click here to enter text.

Are there places in your neighborhood that you like to go to?

Click here to enter text.

Do you belong to clubs, groups, a church, etc.?

Click here to enter text.

What hobbies or interests do you have?

Click here to enter text.

What are your typical sleep hours?

Click here to enter text.

Networking contacts (family, friends, previous employers, other)

Click here to enter text.

Information from family, previous employers or others

Click here to enter text.

_____ Date: _____
Staff signature

_____ Date: _____
Client signature

Sample Job Search Plan

Job seeker: Alice W.

Job Preferences → list most to least important:

(Preferences can include type of work, number of work hours, job location, type of work environment, work shift, or other factors.)

- 1) Working with children—using her certificate for after school childcare programs.
- 2) No more than one bus transfer from home
- 3) Prefers at least 25 hours per week.

Will employment specialist gather information about jobs on the job seeker's behalf (disclosure)? Yes; No. But the specialist will not share Alice's name because she does not want to share information about her mental health with employers. The IPS specialist will focus only on learning about different workplaces.
If yes, how many businesses will the employment specialist visit each month: 2-3.

Will the employment specialist and job seeker apply for jobs together?

Yes; No.

If yes, how often will they meet to do this each month: At least three times each month.

Will the job seeker work on finding jobs outside of the appointments with the employment specialist?

Yes; No. If so, what: Alice will contact her old employer to enquire about re-employment or a work reference. She will also go to job interviews on her own and search for job leads online.

What businesses will the employment specialist and/or job seeker approach first:

ABC After School (Alice)
Einstein Day Camp
New Bridge
Open Doors Academy
YMCA
City Parks Department
City Schools

Alice W.

Job Seeker's Signature

May 9, 2027

Date

Ted Anderson

Employment Specialist's Signature

May
9, 2027

Date

Sample Education Support Plan

Person’s goal: “I want a job with benefits. I’m interested in something in the medical field, but don’t want to spend more than a year or two in school. I am thinking about becoming a dental hygienist but am not sure if there are other options I would like.”

Goal	Objectives	Person(s) responsible:	Frequency:	Target date:
Julio will decide upon a program that matches his interests and will apply to a school.	Julio and employment specialist will meet with VR counselor to learn about jobs in the medical field that require short (1 year or less) training programs.	Julio Lisa Sabin John Edwards	1-2 times	January 2019
	Julio and employment specialist will visit the community college to meet with an academic advisor to learn about the short-term medical degrees/certifications offered.	Julio Lisa Sabin	Once	February 2019
	Julio and employment specialist will investigate financial aide and grants available for classes at the community college.	Julio Lisa Sabin	1-2 times	February 2019
	Julio will take the placement tests required by all students for the community college. Employment specialist will help Julio learn where the tests are given and how to schedule himself to take the tests.	Julio Lisa Sabin	Once	March 2019
	Julio will complete an application to community college for the program of his choice. Employment specialist to help, as needed.	Julio Lisa Sabin	Once	March 2019

Lisa Sabin

12/25/18

Julio

12/25/18

Employment specialist signature

Date

Client signature

Date

Job Support Plan

Worker: Tom A. Employer: Lakewood Landscaping Date: March 15, 2025

1. Plan for getting to work: Bus

Back-up plan for getting to work: Tom can walk to work in about 25 minutes if needed.

2. What strengths will help the worker succeed on the job: Tom is a hardworking person and is strong. He enjoys being outside and growing plants. He has had similar jobs in the past. He is a conscientious worker.

3. What does the worker want to get out of the job (*for example, meet new people, buy a car, be busy, have more income, ...*): Tom's goal is to pay off some fines to the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, get his license back, and buy a car. He is also feeling bored at home. Tom likes to feel busy and helpful to others.

4. What does the worker want help with in the new job (*for example, getting up on time, dealing with nervous feelings, getting feedback from the boss, having good relationships with co-workers, learning the job, getting tools/clothing for work...*)? On his last job Tom had difficulty understanding his co-workers when they joked with him. He thinks it is helpful to meet and talk about what happened on the job to get another perspective. He also thought it was helpful to have meetings with his boss to talk about how the job was going.

5. Will the IPS specialist have contact with the supervisor? yes; no.

If yes, please describe how often and what type of contact: Every other week for the first two months (see next page).

Signed release of information for specialist to talk with the employer? yes; no.

6. Who else can help with job supports?

Family member: Mother Friend: _____

Case manager (or other primary worker): _____

Other care professional: _____, Someone else: _____

How will the person help? Tom is close to his mother. We'll meet together to talk about how the job is going once a month for the first two months, then quarterly.

Signed release of information for identified support person? yes; no.

(continued on next page)

7. Job supports

Type of support	Where	When/how often	Who
Rides to work.	Car	Daily for the first week	IPS specialist and Tom
Meetings to talk about the job and coworkers	Tom's apartment	Weekly for the first two months	IPS specialist and Tom
Meetings with supervisor to talk about how job is going	Lakewood Landscaping	After two weeks and then monthly for two months, then quarterly	IPS specialist, Tom, supervisor
Meetings with Tom's mother	Tom's mother's house	Monthly for two months then quarterly	Tom, his mom, IPS specialist

Notes/Updates:

<i>Mickie Rojas</i>	<i>3/15/25</i>	Tom A	<i>3/15/25</i>
IPS specialist	Date	Worker	Date