

Employment Works!

Employment Supports for People with Mental Illness A Newsletter for IPS Supported Employment



Summer 2009

Sponsored by the Johnson & Johnson – Dartmouth Community Mental Health Program

Educating Decision Makers about Supported Employment in D.C.

Each year the Department of Mental Health goes before the Human Services



Steve Baker, District of Columbia

Oversight Committee, which is made up of city council members. We go to answer questions about the work that we've done over the past year and to describe how our programs are doing.

This year, we felt that the work we have been doing to educate the committee about supported employment has really paid off.

The chairperson of the committee is the type of person who holds directors and managers accountable. It takes hard facts to sway his opinion. He observed, however, that the IPS supported employment programs are serving larger numbers of people and that more people are employed than in the past. Program outcomes demonstrated the effectiveness of supported employment to this decision maker.

Prior to the meeting, the chairperson requested a list of employers who have hired individuals from supported employment programs. He was so impressed at the long list of businesses, including some very recognizable companies, that he said that he wanted to express the city's gratitude to the employers by entering the names of the businesses into the public record and he went on to read the name of each business into the minutes. Because the meetings are shown on a cable television channel, this reading provided free publicity to all of the employers.

Finally, individual stories seem to help members of the committee understand how employment fuels recovery — how working can contribute to a person's health. This year we shared the story of a young man who had spent much of his time "locked away in his room." Jerry* didn't have much contact with his family or others, but his case manager talked to him about supported employment and Jerry ended up getting hired for a part-time job as a courtesy clerk at a large store. He did so well at work that he increased his hours to full-time. Since then Jerry has been voted employee of the month and has been able to buy a brand new car. But what impresses people who know Jerry is the way that he has been able to open up socially and connect to other people at work.

Program sustainability depends upon informed stakeholders who feel passionate about IPS supported employment. In D.C., we'll continue to share program outcomes and client stories with decision makers and other stakeholders as a way to promote supported employment in the years to come.

*not his real name



At the Johnson & Johnson-Dartmouth Annual Meeting, family advocacy groups shared their plans to promote IPS supported employment in Connecticut, Illinois and Vermont. These groups are also helping IPS teams think of strategies to include families in supported employment services.



Johnson & Johnson – Dartmouth Participants

State of Connecticut
District of Columbia
State of Illinois
State of Kansas
State of Maryland
State of Minnesota
State of Missouri
State of Ohio
State of Oregon
State of South Carolina
State of Vermont
Mental Health Services for Homeless
Persons, Inc., Cleveland, OH
Thresholds Justice Program, Chicago, IL

In This Issue

Educating Decision Makers about Supported Employment in D.C.....	1
Finding Jobs in Hard Times	2
Sally's Story	2
New Resources for IPS Supported Employment Programs	2
Ask Your Questions about IPS Supported Employment	3
An Employer's Perspective	3
Supported Employment Practice Principles	4
Supported Employment Resources....	4

Finding Jobs in Hard Times

Charles Havens

Vocational Services Coordinator
Chestnut Health Services, Granite City, IL

The economy is tough in Granite City. It's a small town and the two largest employers are both suffering. The people who are out of work are applying for any kind of job that is open and some employers are making it a priority to help out people who have been laid off. So, as a supervisor, I am really going to focus on job development mentoring on an indefinite basis. I'm going out with each employment specialist twice a month. We are going to hone in on developing excellent job development skills and building relationships with employers.

Rebecca Gallagher

Employment Specialist
MHS, Inc., Cleveland, OH

I met a manager in February who told me that he was having trouble with some of his employees — that they didn't have a good work ethic. He hired one of my clients because he felt that he could trust me to help him find people who are a good match for the jobs that he has, and he also liked the idea that I would still be around if any problems come up. Even when the economy is bad, employment specialists still have a valuable service to offer to employers.

Jeffrey Zola

Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor
Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission

Even though employers are not hiring as often, they still appreciate relationships with employment specialists who take the time to understand their needs. They don't want to put an ad in the paper and deal with 100 job seekers. I believe they would rather connect to someone who can help them find the right person. The employment specialists who will continue to help people get jobs will be the specialists who get out into the community to meet with employers.

Sally's Story

I have been diagnosed with bipolar disorder and post traumatic stress disorder. I've had trouble with alcohol and suicidal thoughts and attempts. One year I was in and out of the hospital 14 times!

A couple of years ago I came back to Oregon because this is where my family is. Since I've been here, I've been feeling much better. It helped that the county was able to help me find a good place to live where I also receive a little bit of help. I've been going to drug and alcohol treatment classes and other groups. In July of last year I got my dog and he has been a great part of my recovery!

I started to think that I needed to do something else besides sitting in my apartment. In September I saw an ad in the paper for a part-time dog groomer and I called them. They asked me to come in

and try out grooming a couple of dogs. The owner liked my work and hired me on a part-time basis. I got the job on my own but

Jeff (employment specialist) was around so that I had someone to give me support — someone to talk to about situations.

Now I'm working with Jeff to get a Pass Plan from Social Security so that I can earn extra money while I start my own dog grooming business. We're also working with a small business specialist from the local college to put together a business plan.

I've really enjoyed it. I feel more satisfied and fulfilled with my life. When people are active out there with the public, it takes their mind off their disability and gives them a chance to be with people. I enjoy working with customers and educating customers about their dogs. I try to point out things that I think are potential health problems. Customers appreciate my concern.



New Resources for IPS Supported Employment Programs

Online Training

Program: In response to the many programs that have requested accessible training, Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Center has developed an online training course

for supported employment programs. It includes nine units for practitioners and supervisors, with two additional units for supervisors only. The course will be piloted with a small group during the fall of 2009 and will be available for others during the winter of 2010. More information about this interactive course will be posted on our website.

Supported Employment: Individual Placement and Support Brochure: A large, 8-page brochure provides information about supported employment program structure and practice principles. This colorful brochure is ideal as a quick refer-



ence tool for employment specialists and VR counselors, as well as an educational tool for stakeholder groups such as family advocates, state departments and consumer groups. This brochure is

available in English & Spanish versions. Copies of the brochure can be ordered from our website.

Supported Employment (IPS) Program Implementation Kit: Includes tips and examples of successful implementation strategies for all components of the IPS model. The kit is intended for programs that are implementing supported employment and wish to improve services, agencies that are considering whether or not to implement supported employment, and supported employment trainers and fidelity reviewers. Kits may be ordered from our website: <http://dms.dartmouth.edu/dsec/>

Individual Placement and Support (IPS) is the evidence-based practice of supported employment for people with serious mental illness

An Employer's Perspective

What has been your experience with supported employment?

I have hired two people from the local supported employment program and both are dedicated and focused. We want each guest at our hotel to have a memorable stay and these employees are helping us do just that.

Why have you chosen to hire people from a supported employment program when there are so many people out of work right now?

I believe that we have to assist the people who come to the hotel as well as the people in our community. Everybody has the right to work. If a job seeker has a disability, but can help us fulfill our mission, then that is a person I want to hire. Further, I've had two good experiences with the program so I would consider calling Debbie Joseph (employment specialist) in the future. I guess I can also say that it is cheaper than placing a want ad in the paper!

What is your relationship with the employment specialist?

I first heard about supported employment when Debbie came to the hotel to talk to me about the program. But she also continues to work with me. I had a small issue with one employee and she came here that day to work on the issue. She also came back the next day to make sure things were going smoothly and we have not had any problems since. Working with Debbie has been wonderful.

Mary Spannhake

Director of Human Services
Westin Hotels
Columbus, Ohio

Ask Your Questions about IPS Supported Employment

Submit your questions about IPS Supported Employment at <http://dms.dartmouth.edu/dsec/ask>. Answers to questions are posted anonymously on the website. Below is an example of a question that was submitted to the website concerning supported education:

Question: We are trying to improve our fidelity and were under the impression that supported education did not have a place in the evidence-based model. We then noticed that the Johnson & Johnson-Dartmouth project is tracking the number of individuals who are participating in education programs. Would we be off track in offering assistance for education programs that lead to employment?

Answer: IPS supported employment programs assist with education programs, as well as with competitive jobs. In fact, the Supported Employment Fidelity Scale, revised January 2008, makes reference to career development and education under the service item, "Individualized Follow-Along Supports." Below are a few issues that IPS programs should consider in regard to supporting people with education goals:

- 2) Is the education or training program certified? Is the program one that is for all people, or has it been designed specifically for people with disabilities? In the same way that IPS focuses on competitive work, IPS also focuses only on school programs that are for everyone, rather than segregated programs for people with disabilities.
- 3) Does the person need the help of an IPS supported employment program to be successful in school? Some people may only want the help of a counselor or case manager to provide support or problem solving. Others may want side-by-side assistance from an employment specialist who can help them find the right school/training program, investigate accommodations, and help look into financial aide. Remember that employment specialists keep caseloads of only 20 people so space should be reserved for people who truly need the service.

It should also be noted that at this time, it is unclear which supported education model is most effective. For example, in some programs each employment specialist is responsible for providing supported education, as well as help with jobs. Some programs serving young adults, who often want both school and work, have indicated it has been helpful for one person to coordinate both school and work support services. In other programs, one person is responsible for providing all of the supported education services for the supported employment team. Further research is needed to clarify this issue.

Without work my days are empty.
When my days are empty I feel useless.
Working makes me feel complete.

Supported Employment Practice Principles

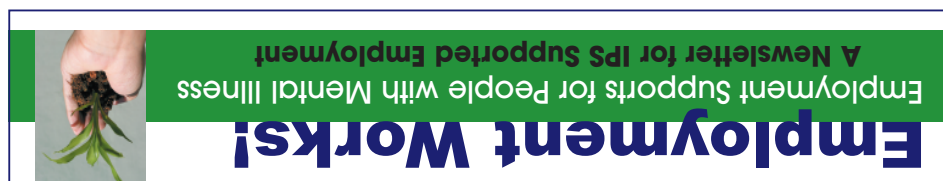
- Every individual who wants employment is eligible
- Supported employment services are integrated with treatment
- Competitive employment is the goal
- Personalized benefits counseling is provided
- Job search starts soon after a person expresses interest in working
- Follow-along supports are continuous
- Individual preferences are important

Supported Employment Resources

The Supported Employment Website at the Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Center is a rich source of information and tools to facilitate the implementation of IPS evidence-based supported employment. You can download a variety of materials including the 2008 fidelity scale and manual, posters, videos, pamphlets and newsletters. In addition, you can subscribe to our newsletter, *Employment Works!* and order additional books and materials. Visit our website at <http://dms.dartmouth.edu/dsec/>

I wanted to get back to work—
back to real life.

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