Implementing IPS in Rural Areas

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Discussion Questions

IN RURAL COMMUNITIES…

• Is it harder to help clients find jobs? If so, why?
• Is harder to achieve high IPS fidelity? If so, why?
• What are main implementation barriers?
• What are the unique advantages to being a rural program?
IPS programs: Rural versus Urban

• How do rural programs compare to urban programs on fidelity and outcome?

• Findings from studies of the IPS Learning Community
Most states in the IPS Learning Community include large rural areas, including Oregon, Utah, Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, Missouri, Minnesota, Michigan, Vermont, South Carolina!!
Examples of States with Successful IPS Programs in Rural Areas

Oregon
Kansas
Vermont

Several rural IPS programs have been recognized for excellence by IPS Learning Community
Urban vs. Rural IPS Programs: Early Findings (Becker, 2006)

• 26 sites in 7 states
  • 12 urban (population > 50,000)
  • 14 rural (population < 50,000)
• Examined predictors of competitive employment outcomes
  • Predictors included IPS fidelity and local unemployment rate
Comparing Rural to Urban IPS Programs in Becker Study

Comparing urban and rural programs,

IPS fidelity was almost identical

Access to IPS was very similar ($r = .04$)

Competitive employment rate was higher in rural sites ($r = -.36$, $p = .07$)
Urban vs. Rural IPS Programs: Recent Findings (Haslett, 2011; Luciano, 2014)

• Rurality defined by a national website and based on zip code:
  • Urban (>50,000)
  • Rural
    • Micropolitan (10,000-50,000)
    • Small Town (<10,000)
IPS Competitive Employment Rates Similar in Large Cities and Rural Communities (Haslett, 2011)

Mean Employment Rate for IPS Programs in Different Sized Communities

- Metropolitan (N=66): 43%
- Micropolitan (10,000-50,000) (N=14): 49%
- Small Town (N=7): 40%
## IPS Fidelity: Urban-Rural Comparisons (Luciano, 2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Urban (N=56)</th>
<th>Rural (N=23)</th>
<th>p-value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IPS-25 total</td>
<td>100 ± 14</td>
<td>104 ± 12</td>
<td>ns</td>
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<tr>
<td>mean team caseload</td>
<td>66.0</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>ns</td>
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<td>1. Caseload size</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>5.0</td>
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<td>2. Exclusively vocational</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>0.08</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Integration with treatment</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>0.06</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Contact with treatment</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>0.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Vocational unit</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.0</td>
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<td>13. Disclosure</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Individualized assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. Employer diversity</td>
<td>4.4</td>
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<td>22. Individualized supports</td>
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Crucial IPS Implementation Issues in Rural Areas

• Low population density
• Transportation
• IPS supervision
• Job development
• Stigma
Low Population Density: Issues

• Employment team not practical → Solo employment specialist not optimal
• In some cases, even one full-time employment specialist not feasible
• Smallness adversely affects IPS unit and IPS supervision
Transportation: Issues

• How do consumers get to job site?
• “Windshield time” for practitioners
• Mileage reimbursement too low
Transportation: Strategies

- Ask: “How does everyone else get to work?”
- Ask at church or civic groups
- Informal taxi service/coworkers
- Rural mass transit less rigid (senior ride program)
- *Kansas solution*: Donate cars
- Aim job development at employers accessible using client’s expected transportation system
Strategies for IPS Supervision in Rural Areas

• Mental health staff pitch in
• Teleconferencing and co-supervision with other employment specialists in region
• Integrating VR counselors into supervision
Job Development: Issues

• Fewer options for job matching
• Economy may be tied to a single employer
• What happens if only factory shuts down?
• Confidentiality issues associated with rural familiarity
Rural Job Development Strategies

• Skillful persistent job development still crucial
• Different interpersonal approach to employers in rural areas compared to cities
• Personal networks
• Self-employment??
Stigma: Issues

• Everyone knows everyone – Cannot hide behind anonymity
• Reputation may be hard to overcome
• May be a barrier to hiring
Strategies for Overcoming Stigma

• Familiarity can be used to advantage
• Rural communities “take care of their own”
• “Word of mouth” produces quick information on job leads
• Consulting frequently with local VR counselor
Overall Conclusions

• Implementation issues in rural areas include broad factors true everywhere:
  Financing, leadership, quality improvement

• Rural geography adds further unique challenges

• The evidence suggests these barriers can be overcome