

# Individual Placement and Support - IPS

**The Evidence-Based Practice for Employment**

**Updated 3.2.20**



Employment Center



# Research

- **Originally studied and validated with people with serious mental illness, including people with co-occurring substance use disorders**

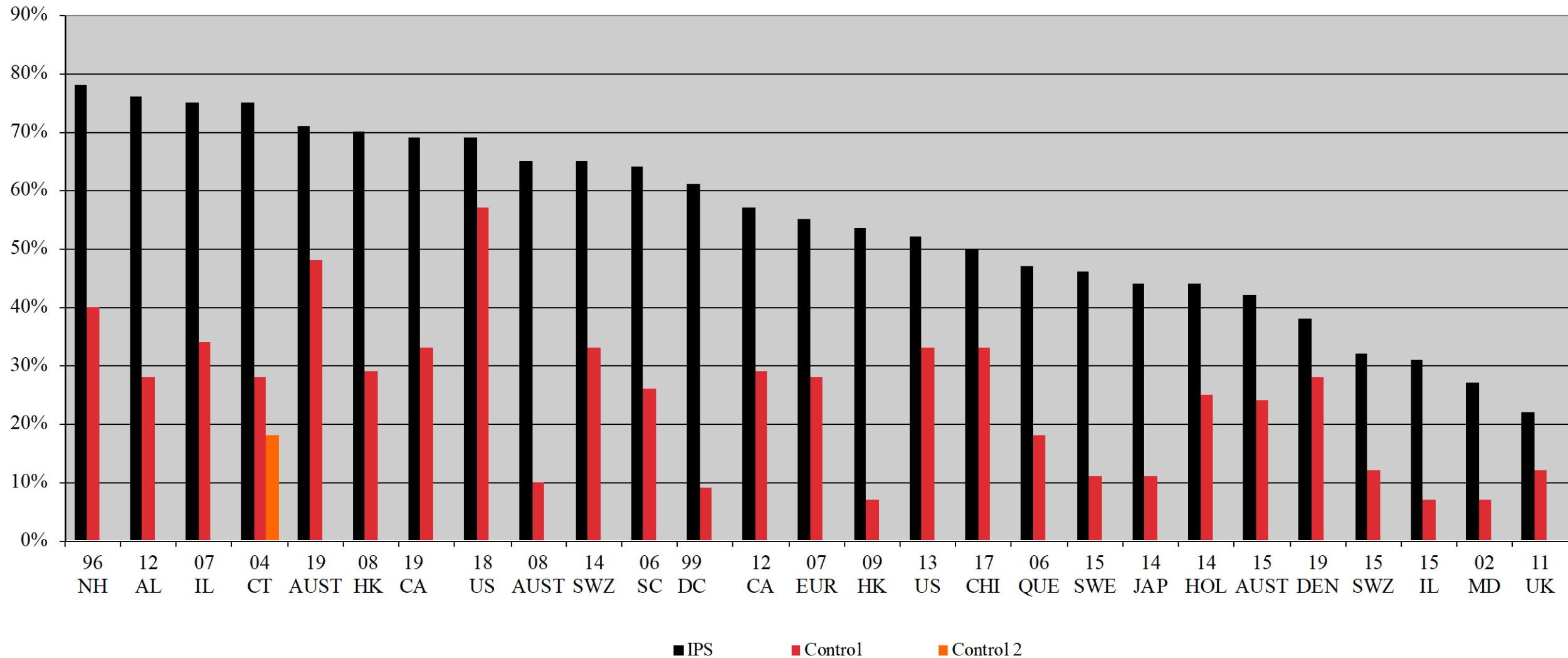




# Research

- **IPS has been compared to traditional vocational rehabilitation approaches that typically include stepwise features such as prevocational assessment, sheltered settings, and volunteer work.**
- **Randomized controlled trials (RCTs) are the gold standard in medicine.**
- **Studies included if assessed for fidelity.**

# Competitive Employment Rates in 27 Randomized Controlled Trials of IPS



# Overall Findings for 27 RCTs

- **26 of 27 studies showed a significant advantage for IPS**  
Exception: Study in mainland China had borderline significance
- **Mean competitive employment rate:**
  - **55% for IPS**
  - **24% for controls**

# IPS is Effective in a Wide Variety of Populations

- PTSD diagnosis
- Mental illness + substance use
- Older adults
- First episode of psychosis
- Homeless
- Criminal justice history
- Disability beneficiaries
- Various racial and ethnic groups



# Emerging Evidence for Other Populations

- **Common mental health disorders**
- **Substance use disorders**
- **Autism spectrum disorder**
- **Intellectual disabilities**
- **Musculoskeletal/neurological disorders**
- **Transition age youth with mental health conditions**
- **TANF – Temporary Aid to Need Families (in US)**

# Why Focus on Employment and Careers?

- **Considered by many as an important part of recovery**
- **Most people with serious mental illness want to work**
- **Employment is a typical role for adults in our society**
- **Cost-effective alternative to day treatment**



# Benefits of Steady Competitive Employment

- **Increased income**
- **Improved self esteem**
- **Improved social networks**
- **Increased quality of life**
- **Better control of symptoms**
- **Reduced hospitalization**
- **Reduced substance use**
- **Reduced use of mental health services**





# Negative Effects of Unemployment in General Population

- Increased substance abuse
- Increased physical problems
- Increased psychiatric disorders
- Reduced self esteem
- Loss of social contacts
- Alienation and apathy

(Warr, 1987)



# What People Say

**“When you are working, you are part of the real world. You feel connected. Having a job gives me stability. I have something to look forward to every day.”**

**“In the past, people might have used labels to describe me such as ‘homeless,’ ‘mentally ill,’ and ‘welfare mother.’ Now my titles are ‘financial administrator,’ ‘college student,’ and ‘working mom.’”**



# What People Say

**“I was really glad that my son’s employment counselor asked me about work ideas. My son wanted me to be a part of the team. And he landed a job that I suggested.”**

**“I worried that if my daughter got a job, she would feel stressed. But just the opposite happened. She is doing much better than before.”**



# What People Say

**“Andre is as good as any worker that I have.” Automotive parts store manager**

**“I count on Juanita. If she is feeling stressed, she sits in a room by herself for awhile. That’s okay; she gets the job done.” Bakery supervisor**

**“The employment counselor helped me understand why Tony paces. It’s okay in the security business.” Security business owner**



# Wellness and Recovery

**Wellness moves the focus from thinking one needs treatment forever to capitalizing on the strengths and abilities of the individual and his/her family and community.**

**M. Swarbrick, CSPNJ**



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# Who Provides IPS Services?

**IPS specialists (sometimes called employment specialists or supported employment and education specialists) provide direct assistance with work and education/technical training.**

**IPS specialists work closely with a team of practitioners who provide services for the same group of people.**

# IPS Principles

- **Open to anyone who wants to work**
- **Focus on competitive employment**
- **Rapid job search**
- **Targeted job development**
- **Client preferences guide decisions**
- **Individualized long-term supports**
- **Integrated with treatment**
- **Benefits counseling included**





# Open to Anyone Who Wants to Work

- **Eligibility is based on client choice**
- **People are not excluded because of diagnosis, recent hospitalizations, criminal justice history, or work readiness criteria**



# Focus on Competitive Integrated Employment

- **IPS specialists help people find jobs that exist in the open labor market and pay the same as others in a similar position (at least minimum wage), including part-time and full-time jobs.**
- **People are not steered into sheltered jobs (that are set aside for people with disabilities) but work in community settings with others who do not have disabilities.**



# Rapid Job Search

- **IPS specialists help people start looking for jobs within one month of starting the program.**
- **Pre-employment assessment, training and counseling are not required and are kept to a minimum.**
- **IPS specialists help people explore the world of work at a pace that is right for the individual.**

# Targeted Job Development

- **Based on individuals' interests, IPS specialists build relationships with employers to learn about the employers' needs in order to identify qualified job candidates.**
- **IPS specialists make multiple visits to the same employers to develop relationships and average six face-to-face contacts with hiring managers per week.**

# Individual Preferences Guide Decisions

- **The job search is based on individual preferences, strengths, and work experiences, not on a pool of jobs that are readily available.**
- **Job seekers indicate preferences for job type, work hours, and types of job supports.**



# Individualized Long-Term Supports

- **IPS specialists provide support for as long as needed and desired, without arbitrary time limits.**
- **Job supports are individualized based on the needs of the person and what will promote a positive work experience.**
- **IPS specialists help people with job changes and career advancement, including additional schooling and training.**



# IPS is Integrated with Treatment

- **IPS specialists meet at least weekly with the team of providers who serve the same group of people, for example, care coordinators, therapists, medication providers, housing specialists.**
- **The team meets together regularly to review clients' status and plans coordinated, recovery-oriented services.**

# Personalized Benefits Counseling

- **IPS specialists refer people for comprehensive, individualized benefits planning by a trained benefits specialist so they can make informed decisions about starting or changing jobs.**





# Key Factors in Implementation

- **Build consensus**
- **Maximize financing**
- **Examine agency philosophy**
- **Identify leadership**
- **Key on organizational structure**
- **Provide ongoing training/technical assistance**
- **Make time commitment**
- **Track process and outcomes**



# Build Consensus

- **Develop a steering committee to oversee implementation process**
- **Include representatives from all stakeholder groups:**
  - Local and state mental health and vocational rehabilitation leaders**
  - Funders**
  - Providers**
  - Service recipients**
  - Family members**
  - Employers**
  - School counselors**
- **Educate stakeholders about the practice**





# Maximize Funding

- **Determine how IPS services can be funded – Which funding sources pay for which parts of IPS?**
- **Explore funding (in the US) from Medicaid, state vocational rehabilitation funds, state mental health contracts and grants**
- **Approximately \$5,000 per person in the first year and typically accruing limited costs thereafter (Salkever, 2013).**
- **Reallocate resources to IPS when feasible**



# Examine Agency Philosophy

- **Determine if service agency's philosophy, mission statement, and service paradigm are consistent with a recovery-oriented IPS approach.**
- **Are there competing programs such as day treatment and/or stepwise vocational services that may include sheltered work, work readiness assessments, volunteer work?**



# Identify Leadership

- **Identify a committed agency IPS champion who has the authority to oversee and ensure implementation.**
- **Leaders at all levels, including the agency director, visibly demonstrate support for IPS and consumers gaining integrated competitive employment.**
- **Leadership from state vocational rehabilitation reinforces commitment to IPS and collaboration with IPS services.**
- **Critical role of IPS supervisor in program success.**

# Organizational Structure

- **IPS specialists join one or two multidisciplinary teams, share office space, attend weekly team meetings to discuss shared clients.**
- **Mental health treatment team integrates IPS, benefits counseling, care management, medication management, and substance use treatment.**
- **IPS supervisor provides weekly group outcomes-based supervision to IPS specialists.**



# Provide Ongoing Training/Technical Assistance

- **Agency staff receive initial training on IPS and the roles of different practitioners (e.g., care managers, therapists, medication prescribers, housing specialists) in supporting people's work efforts.**
- **IPS trainer provides ongoing training and technical assistance to help the agency reach good IPS implementation.**
- **IPS supervisor trains and mentors new staff on IPS services.**

# Make Time Commitment

- Typically, 6-12 months to build agency interest to implement IPS, organize team structure, access stable funding, and develop staff skills and confidence to implement IPS.





# Track Process and Outcomes

- **Track integrated competitive employment outcomes on a monthly and quarterly basis.**
- **Set realistic incremental goals.**
- **Baseline IPS fidelity review typically occurs 6-9 months after program start when people have obtained employment, and conducted every six months until reaching at least 100 on the 25-item IPS Fidelity Scale, and yearly thereafter.**



# Summary

- **People with serious mental illness do want to work and can work in competitive integrated employment.**
- **IPS is a successful employment intervention for a wide variety of populations.**
- **IPS is an evidence-based practice that includes program manuals and an IPS Fidelity Scale to serve as roadmaps for good program implementation.**
- **Agency leaders organize services, maximize funding, provide training and supervision, monitor implementation and track outcomes to ensure high-quality IPS services.**

# Resources

- [www.IPSworks.org](http://www.IPSworks.org)
- Online courses for practitioners and supervisors
- *IPS Supported Employment: A Practical Guide (2013)*
- 25-item IPS Supported Employment Fidelity Scale