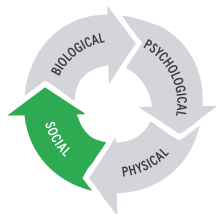


4. Support and therapies for work, education and things that you do



Individual placement (vocational) support (support to get and keep a job)



The main focus of this approach is on social and occupational factors.



Remember, more thumbs up just means that more people have done research that shows that this approach works.

What is it?

Individual placement support (IPS) is a type of vocational support which aims to help you to get and keep a paid job.

There are eight principles of IPS:

1. An employment specialist (ES) works as part of the clinical team, so that there can be a team approach to supporting you to achieve your work related goals.

2. Normal paid work is the main goal – you are not asked to take part in lengthy pre-work training or ‘sheltered’ work that is separate from normal work.

3. Job searching begins quickly, usually within 1 month, after you start with the Employment Specialist. Supporting you to develop work skills on the job is more effective than other types of pre-work training or sheltered work.

4. You decide when you are ready to start the job search process. As long as you are interested in getting a job, Individual Placement Support may be helpful – your own motivation to work is an important part of successfully getting a job.

5. The aim is to match the job to your choices and preferences about types of work, place, hours, etc. Unsurprisingly people tend to stay employed longer at jobs that meet their preferences.

6. In-work, support is provided for you and your employer over a number of months, and help is provided if you want to change jobs.

7. Benefits advice is given during the change into a job. This is so that you can understand how part- or full-time work will affect the money that you have each week. You can then make choices about the right work for you.

8. Working with the person or company that gives you the job is a key part of the employment specialist’s role.

What does it aim to do?

There is strong evidence that work is good for health:

- it promotes recovery
- leads to better health outcomes
- reduces poverty and social exclusion
- improves quality of life and wellbeing.

There is a lot of evidence that people with unusual distressing experiences can do normal paid work or education, with the right support.

Does it work?

There have been at least 16 good quality research trials nationally and internationally which show clearly that IPS supports more people into work than any other approach.

One of the main things that makes IPS successful is that the employment service is part of the early intervention or mental health service. Eight randomised trials compared IPS services in mental health teams with IPS services on their own. These studies showed that people getting help from IPS services that were part of the mental health team were more likely to get a job, for more hours and with higher wages than people who were getting help from a separate IPS service.

National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (NICE)

Individual placement support (IPS) is described in NICE guidance as the best way to support people with unusual distressing experiences who want to work, to be able to get a job.

How can I get this treatment?

Employment support should be available either within the early intervention or mental health service, or from another agency working closely with the mental health team.

✓ Main pro

Lots of research shows that this approach really works and that people do get and keep a job, which can have an enormous positive effect on their life. The whole approach is positive and encouraging; as long as you want to work the support is available.

✗ Main con

Not all mental health services have employment support, so sometimes availability can be patchy. Employment support is sometimes offered alongside voluntary work and support for other leisure activities. This can mean that there is not enough focus on work related issues, so the chances of getting and keeping paid work are not as good as they could be.

