

IPS Supported Employment – Practice Principles

1. Competitive employment is the primary goal

Employment Specialists support consumers to secure competitive jobs within the open labour market, paid at least minimum wage or the same rate as others for performing the same duties.

2. Integrated with mental health treatment

IPS supported employment services are embedded with clinical support. Employment specialists are integrated into mental health treatment teams to ensure coordinated services for individuals who wish to find paid work. Fully integrated services enable the employment specialist and members of the clinical mental health team to work together and share information and ideas for the benefit and recovery of the individual.

3. Zero exclusion

All individuals with severe and enduring mental ill-health who are personally **motivated** to find competitive employment have equal opportunity to access the IPS program. Eligibility is not based on diagnosis, symptoms, work history, drug or alcohol use or cognitive impairment. Motivation to find a job and self-belief around ability to do this are the best predictors of who will successfully make a move back to work.

4. Client Preferences

Supports and job search activities are based upon client preferences. A person is supported to explore their interests so that a positive job match can be made with the anticipation of obtaining a job of choice that leads to better job satisfaction and length of job tenure.

5. Benefits counselling

Work incentives planning or benefits counselling refers to job seekers being offered comprehensive, accurate, timely and individualised financial information to make informed choices regarding how their income support payments may be affected or how potential earnings may impact on benefit or support entitlements. A return to work may be daunting if income support is at risk and fear of losing allowances is a major reason why individuals may not want to seek employment.

6. Rapid job search

There is an immediate focus on identifying individual job goals and beginning the process of job search within 30 days of program entry; as opposed to completing lengthy pre-employment assessments, training and work experience. Rapid job search capitalises on a person's motivation to find competitive employment.

7. Systemic job development

Employment specialists systematically visit employers, based on job seeker preferences, to build relationships. By meeting face-to-face over multiple visits, employment specialists learn about the work environment and the employers' work needs and hiring preferences. They also find out about vacancies they may not have been aware of. They gather



information about the nature of job opportunities and assess whether it could be a good job fit for jobseekers on the IPS program.

8. Time unlimited support

Individualised, appropriate, time unlimited follow-along support should be offered to a person after they commence competitive employment. Employment Specialists work alongside the consumer and their wider circle of support (where permission is given) to ensure that a plan is in place identifying wrap around supports, especially natural workplace supports. This can ensure job placements are successful longer-term. Consumers should be supported to become as independent as possible in their vocational roles, whilst ensuring individualised support and assistance can be provided as needed.