

# Individual Placement and Support Program

October 1, 2023 – Ongoing

## Overview

Employment and income are two of the most important social determinants of health that impact personal health outcomes and quality of life. They shape our overall living conditions, including access to housing, food security, and other basic needs. People who have a job are healthier, have increased self-esteem, and higher quality of life.

Between 70% - 90% of Canadians living with mental illness are unemployed. Despite evidence that most people living with mental health concerns can and want to work, they often face various barriers to employment, including stigma and discrimination.

Individual Placement and Support (IPS) is an evidence-based employment support program offered by Mental Health and Addiction Services in the Western Zone. The IPS program aligns with the Health Accord for Newfoundland and Labrador. The IPS Program also supports NL Health Services Strategic Plan to increase access to comprehensive, client-centered services.



More than seven out of 10 people living with serious mental illness are unemployed.

## Goal

The IPS Program aims to support individuals with mental illness to obtain and maintain competitive employment within the Western Zone.

“ This is a much-needed program for people with mental illness. I would still be in the same hopeless situation if I didn't get the support and help. ”

- IPS Participant

## Activities

The evidence-based IPS model is proven to be the most effective supported employment model in assisting clients to find and maintain competitive employment. Participants are twice as likely to find jobs and can keep jobs for two to three times longer than without IPS.

The IPS team consists of one full-time job opportunities officer and one half-time occupational therapist. This team provides comprehensive employment support services to clients who have identified employment or education as a recovery goal. Supports include:

- Client-centred assessment and goal identification;
- Pre-employment skills and readiness training;
- Employer networking and advocacy;
- Assessment and intervention related to self-identified barriers to employment; and
- Collaboration and engagement with community partners related to employment outcomes.



## Intervention Overview

The IPS program launched in 2023 in partnership with the Flexible Assertive Community Treatment (FACT) Team. The FACT team was used as a referral source to pilot the program with a small, controlled number of clients. The program has provided comprehensive support through various stages of employment, such as:

- Resumé education and building
- Education on job search and application process
- Interview skills and preparation
- Transportation to interviews and to pass out resumés
- Assistance with navigating aspects of job startup
- Advocacy for increased hours, responsibility, or accommodations at work
- Assisting with applications for record suspensions through John Howard Society
- Management of workplace challenges and setbacks in relation to mental health and addictions
- Benefits counselling in relation to gainful employment
- Coping strategies for dealing with work stress/life skill development

“ My mental health and quality of life has improved. I have dignity... I have a job. ”

- IPS Participant

## Outcomes/Progress

Over the past 11 months, the IPS Program has successfully supported clients in the Corner Brook/Bay of Islands and Stephenville/Bay St. George neighbourhoods, with intention to expand throughout the Western Zone:

40

Total referrals for service.

75%

Clients received employment support.

23%

Clients achieved their employment goals to date.

## Opportunities

- The IPS program aims to strengthen its network of employer partnerships throughout the Western Zone, reducing stigma surrounding the employment of individuals with mental illness.
- Planning is underway to choose a new name for this service with public input.

