From Thinking It, To Saying It, To Doing It: Engagement Strategies for Helping People Move Toward Employment

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Learning Objectives

Participants will learn:

• the principles of the Individual Placement and Support model of supported employment (IPS)

• how these principles help to facilitate engagement

• about how CPI’s Employment Resource Book helps to facilitate engagement
Agenda

• IPS principles
  • how they impact our thinking, language, and actions
  • How they help to facilitate engagement

• CPI’s Employment Resource Book
  • How it helps to facilitate engagement
Principles of IPS

- **Goal**: Competitive employment and mainstream education/training
- **Eligibility**: based on the interest and choice of the consumer-- Zero Exclusion
- **Person-centered**: Person’s preferences are central
- **Team-Approach**: Integration of vocational/educational and mental health treatment services
- **Entitlements Counseling**: Personalized service
- **Community Relationships**: Job developers develop relationships with educators and employers based on participant choice
- **Speed**: Rapid job/education and training search
- **Supports**: Time-unlimited follow-along supports
Goal: Competitive employment and mainstream education/training
Thinking

Traditional:
• Better off in special setting for people with disabilities
• May not be ready
• Needs pre-vocational experiences

IPS
• Can make it in the right setting with support
• Wants the same kinds of jobs as everyone else
Saying

Traditional:
• “Competitive work can endanger your benefits.”
• “It might be better to start out by volunteering.”
• “You need to be careful about work stressors.”

IPS
• “It pays you to work if you have SSI.”
• “What kind of job can I help you look for?”
• “What is your dream job?”
Doing

Traditional:

• Vocational & educational services are often delayed: “readiness”
• Specialists look for sheltered jobs set aside for people with mental illness

IPS

• Real jobs in the real world
• Personalized vocational/educational services are provided
Goal: Competitive employment and mainstream education/training

How can this principle help to facilitate engagement?
Eligibility:
Based on the interest and choice of the consumer--Zero Exclusion
Thinking

Traditional:

• Lots of reasons to not support employment now: Perceived Readiness, Drug / alcohol use, Symptoms, Hygiene, Legal issues, Dependence on entitlements

IPS

• We’re not good at predicting readiness
• Work and school can be incentives to reduce or stop drug/ alcohol use
Saying

Traditional:

• “You’re not ready”
• “You’ll lose your benefits”
• “You need to be clean and sober”
• “What about the stress making you sick?”
• “Why don’t we wait until your symptoms are better or go away?”

IPS

• “What do you want to do?”
• “How can I help you?”
Doing

Traditional:

- Staff refuses or delays employment services
- Fear of losing benefits might be increased
- Consumer loses momentum
- Consumer gives up on work & school

IPS

- Engagement & assessment begin as soon as consumer expresses a goal, regardless of symptoms, substance use, etc.
Eligibility: based on the interest and choice of the consumer-- Zero Exclusion

How can this principle help to facilitate engagement?
Person-centered:
Person’s preferences are central
Thinking

Traditional: Person’s judgment not to be trusted
• Lack of insight
• Unrealistic goals

IPS
• The individual drives the process
• The individual is the expert on her/his hopes, dreams and goals
Saying

Traditional:

• “Are you sure you want to give up benefits?”
• “We have ten people from the program working at the lamp factory, would you like to try that?”
• “Are you sure you feel ready to go to school/work?”

IPS

• “Can we talk about your dream job?”
• “What is important to you in an employer?”
• “How do you feel about disclosure?”
Doing

Traditional:
- Consumer steered toward jobs
- Focus on segregated/ non-competitive employment

IPS
- Individual’s preferences drive decision making
- Jobs are developed that match individual’s preferences
Person-centered: Person’s preferences are central

How can this principle help to facilitate engagement?
Team-Approach: Integration of vocational/educational and mental health treatment services
Thinking

Traditional:
• Vocational services and mental health services are separate
• Consumer is referred to outside vocational services
• Mixed messages are common. For example: benefits; stress; relapse; readiness

IPS
• It’s important for vocational specialist and mental health treatment team members to coordinate efforts
• Value a consistent message from entire team
Saying

Traditional:
• “It’s a shame that your clinic team doesn’t understand the importance of work.”

IPS
• “Let’s talk with the entire team to make sure that everyone is on board with the plan.”
• “We can work with your social worker to develop an exit plan from SSI/SSDI.”
Doing

Traditional:
• Consumer referred to ACCES-VR for all employment services
• Consumer referred to separate vocational program within an agency (handoff)

IPS
• Integrated team meets regularly to discuss treatment and support strategies
• Vocational specialist provides team with community-based observations
• Team communicates and supports all vocational work
Team-Approach: Integration of vocational/educational and mental health treatment services

How can this principle help to facilitate engagement?
Entitlements Counseling: Personalized service
Thinking

Traditional:
• Consumer often loses by working
• Consumers are only “allowed” to make up to a certain amount
• Consumers who are dependent on benefits are hard to work with
• Benefits counseling groups are efficient and helpful
IPS
• It is impossible to lose monthly income if a consumer with SSI works
• SSI is ¾ of the poverty level at the top amount
• Individualized benefits counseling is the best practice
Saying

Traditional:

• “Be careful about losing your benefits.”
• “You are only allowed to make up to a certain amount.” (‘I don’t know what that is, but….’)
• “If you lose your job, it will be hard to get back on benefits.”

IPS

• “We can help you manage and/or replace your entitlements with earned wages.”
• “There are many safety nets and work incentives that can help you go to work.”
Doing

Traditional:
• Often inconsistent and inaccurate information from staff and natural supports
• Vocational specialist not aware of SSA work incentives or resources for assistance
• Consumer gets scared and gives up

IPS
• Staff encourages and supports consumers toward financial independence
• Staff partners with entitlements experts and SSA to make sure that individual receives accurate information
• Consumer is offered ongoing, time-unlimited entitlements support
Entitlements Counseling: Personalized service

How can this principle help to facilitate engagement?
Community Relationships:
Job developers develop relationships with educators and employers based on participant choice.
Thinking

Traditional:

- Employers don’t have the time and desire to speak with me
- It’s easier and more efficient to use ACCES-VR IPS
- It’s important to use engagement, assessment, and SDM with the individual to determine which employers to approach
Saying

Traditional:
• “We don’t have the kind of job you are looking for right now but we do have the lamp factory.”
• “I have an employer who is always hiring, would you like to meet her?”
• “What about going to ACCES-VR?”

IPS
• “Which employers would you like me to talk with?”
• “What are your thoughts on disclosure?”
• “What are you looking for in a work environment?”
Doing

Traditional:
• Consumers wind up working at jobs that do not interest them
• Job boards limit options
• Jobs tend not to last

IPS
• Jobs are chosen because of consumer interest
• Specialists enjoy becoming resources for employers
• Goodness of fit leads to more satisfying jobs.
Community Relationships: Job developers develop relationships with educators and employers based on participant choice.

How can this principle help to facilitate engagement?
Speed:
Rapid job / education and training search
Thinking

Traditional:
• It is best to take it slow – need to get to know the person
• Readiness needs to be assessed
• Prevocational service can help with readiness
• Volunteering first might be best

IPS
• Important to maximize motivation and not slow down the process
• Rapid search is respectful of consumer wishes
• School and work central to recovery
Saying

Traditional:
• “Are you sure you are ready?”
• “We hardly know you.”
• “What about your benefits?”
• “What if the job doesn’t work out?”

IPS
• “I’m happy to get started as soon as you give me the green light.”
• “Let’s start planning together now.”
Doing

Traditional:
• Staff slows the process (with good intention)
• LOTs of assessment
• Prevocational services are mandated
• Consumer loses momentum, becomes frustrated

IPS
• Employment specialist engages with consumer immediately
• Assessment tool used to guide consumer-driven process
• Benefits counseling offered right away
• IPS gold standard: first employer contact within 30 days
Speed: Rapid job / education and training search

How can this principle help to facilitate engagement?
Supports:
Time-unlimited follow-along supports
Thinking

Traditional:

• Once the individual is working, not much else to do
• This is the responsibility of the employment specialist

IPS

• Choosing and getting a job are different than keeping a job
• For some people, ongoing support makes all the difference
• Each team member can provide support
Saying

Traditional:
• “Congratulations on the job. I’ll be seeing less of you now. Good luck.”

IPS
• “Remember that I’m still available to you whenever helpful.”
• “If you’d like, we can schedule regular appointments for as long as you’d like”
Doing

Traditional:

• Follow-along support is time-limited or no longer available

IPS

• Follow-along supports are time-unlimited
• Each team member may provide support
Supports: Time-unlimited follow-along supports

How can this principle help to facilitate engagement?
The Employment Resource Book
What’s in it?: Overview

- Acknowledgements & Table of Contents
- Introduction and Welcome Section
  - Orientation for participants
  - Suggestions for getting started
  - Using the book effectively and in personalized way
- Topic Areas
  - 32 topic areas
- Appendices
  - 10 appendices
What’s in it?: Major Sections

• **Section 1** – Prior to job search
  • (useful for engagement)

• **Section 2** – During job search

• **Section 3** – After getting a job

• Appendices
Section 1 – Prior to Job Search

• My decision to work
• Talking with family and supports about work
• My hopes and concerns about working
• My personal strengths and job preferences
• Important things to consider about my mental health
• Things to consider if I am using substances like drugs and alcohol
• What if I have had legal problems?
Section 1 – Prior to Job Search (cont.)

- Important things to consider if I am a parent
- What if I have physical health issues?
- Medications and side effects
- Finding work without a high school diploma
- Working and my benefits
- Work and my schedule preferences
- Figuring out what I would like to do for work
Structure of Topic Areas

• Important information
  • Introduces topic; facts for thought/discussion

• Personalized activity
  • Think through how information applies to consumer; variety of exercises

• Next steps
  • Many options people may choose; decide on concrete next steps
How Can It Be Used?
Consumers can use it with...

- employment staff members,
- other practitioners,
- peer specialists,
- family or friends,
- and on their own.
Person-Centered, Flexible Approach

• Do not follow the workbook in order – it is not a 32-week curriculum

• Instead, each consumer picks and chooses the topics that “fit” his/her wants, needs and work goals

• People can start wherever they want, use what they want, and go at their own pace
How Can You Get the Employment Resource Book?

- You can obtain these workbooks through the CPI website (http://practiceinnovations.org/)
- Click on the "Purchase CPI Products" tab on our home page
- You will be asked to register and to select a password for your account
- Once your account has been established, you will be able to download electronic versions for free or purchase bound paper copies
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Thank You!