

EMPLOYMENT WORKS!

TWICE-YEARLY IPS SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT NEWSLETTER

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Why assess fidelity?

BY Gary Bond

Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Center

Program fidelity assessments tell us how well a program adheres to the IPS Supported Employment model. Through research across multiple large-scale studies of IPS, we know that fidelity to the model produces the most productive outcomes. That means programs that regularly assess fidelity to the IPS model are more likely to achieve higher job rates.

Fidelity reviews are the single best way to improve quality of services. By giving specific feedback on how to improve program fidelity, IPS staff can make changes to align with this feedback. Based on those large-scale studies (including the efforts of the international IPS learning community), we can confidently say that programs can achieve high fidelity if agency leaders are committed to making positive changes.

Fidelity reviews are worthwhile because they help IPS programs improve the quality of services, which in turn improves clients' lives.

A fidelity scale is a tool used to measure the level of implementation of an evidence-based practice. The IPS Supported Employment Fidelity Scale defines the critical elements of IPS in order to differentiate between programs that have fully implemented the model and those that have not. The scale includes a description of 25 items that can be rated on a scale of 1 to 5. The Supported Employment Fidelity Scale has been validated, meaning that programs with

higher fidelity scores have been shown to achieve higher employment outcomes for IPS clients. The IPS Supported Employment Fidelity Scale is a guide for program leaders and practitioners to improve their programs so that more people work.

Supported employment fidelity visits are conducted by at least two trained reviewers who visit an agency for two days to learn about services and score the fidelity scale. After the visit, reviewers write a report that identifies areas of strength and growth for

(See WHY ASSESS FIDELITY on page 3)

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IPS DARTMOUTH SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT CENTER

IPS stands for Individual Placement and Support and is an evidence-based practice



Tulsa team adds IPS services

Oklahoma—Partners from Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Mental Health Association in Tulsa, Inc., and Community Service Council of Greater Tulsa collaborate to implement an IPS program.

Program in Catalonia uses fidelity for change

BY **Anna Maria Roca**
TRESC, Catalonia, Spain

At the beginning, our agency, TRESC, thought the IPS fidelity scale gave us the opportunity to demonstrate that the supported employment program we had developed experimentally for people with mental illnesses (adapted from that we had been working on for people with intellectual disabilities) was right. Later, when we learned more, we realized there were some differences and gaps in what we had been doing. The response from most professionals was: “What are these Americans saying!? Coordination with the mental health team?? Psychiatrists never want-

ed to hear from us!!! Quick search with people who have any positive symptoms!?? Employment specialists doing both roles: helping people with job supports and job development?” But despite some initial reluctance, once the methodology was gradually implemented, professionals changed their views.

Now our agency values the fidelity scale as very useful and we consider that the process of an external fidelity reviewer helped us to improve and raise continuous improvement. Technical assistance helped us to change internal dynamics and resistance as well. We do not think that we could have changed job development strategies or coordination with the mental health network without external assistance from fidelity reviewers and the IPS trainer.

Un programa català utilitza l'Escala de Fidelitat a IPS per a una millor implementació

A **Anna Maria Roca**
TRESC, Catalonia

Inicialment, a la nostra entitat, TRESC, l'escala IPS ens donava la possibilitat de demostrar que el TaS que havíem desenvolupat de forma experimental amb persones amb malaltia mental (adaptació del que ja portàvem fent amb persones amb discapacitat psíquica) era l'adequat.

Més endavant, a mesura que anàvem coneixent aquesta metodologia, ja veiem que teníem diferències i mancances... La reacció de la majoria de professionals era dir: “Què ens vénen a dir aquests americans? Coordinació amb la xarxa de salut mental? Mai ens han volgut escoltar els psiquiatres! Recerca ràpida amb gent que

presenta qualsevol simptomatologia positiva? Insertors i prospectors en la mateixa figura?”

Tot i aquest rebuig inicial, de mica en mica, en anar implantant la metodologia, van anar canviant els punts de vista.

Finalment, la nostra entitat ha valorat com a molt útil la implantació de la metodologia i ens hem plantejat el suport tècnic com una avaluació externa que ens ajuda a millorar i a plantejar millores contínues. La supervisió tècnica ens ha ajudat a canviar dinàmiques internes i resistències que, potser sense algú de fora que ens ajudés a fer el canvi, no ho haguéssim pogut fer; sobretot, ens referim a l'estratègia de prospecció i també a la millora de la coordinació amb la xarxa de salut mental.

Dartmouth IPS Notes

Fidelity is an important and valued part of any IPS Supported Employment program. We recommend using fidelity reviews to assist programs in delivering the most effective approach to Supported Employment.

We, as well as other researchers, have studied different ways to implement employment services, and this knowledge has helped to form the evidence-based practice.

In 2008, we created the Supported Employment Fidelity Review Manual as a companion to the Supported Employment Fidelity Scale, used to measure fidelity at the sites (see Page 4). In December 2015 we revised that manual and updated the material based on additional studies and data collected over the past seven years.

The new manual, which is available to order on our website, has updated information on the process, fidelity scale item descriptions and scoring mechanisms, updated questions for stakeholder groups, and an updated Career Profile with an expanded section on education.

This issue of our newsletter is dedicated to IPS fidelity in order to highlight the importance of continuous quality improvement.

You'll see articles from programs in Connecticut, Vermont, Kentucky, Illinois, and Catalonia (Spain). Each has seen changes in their program based on fidelity reviews, whether they've had only one or several.

Fidelity reviews are important for programs that want to deliver IPS Supported Employment to their clients; programs like California's Eastbay Works, where Robert has been receiving services for more than four years (see Page 3). Without fidelity reviews, it's likely the program would not have been as successful in assisting Robert.

Fidelity is the only true way to ensure a program is delivering evidence-based IPS Supported Employment.

Success at work, school builds confidence

BY Bethany McLeman

Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Center

Four years ago, Robert rarely left his parents' house. He was overweight, got stressed out easily, felt like he couldn't function, and was dependent on his family. His siblings had moved out long ago and had their own families, but Robert couldn't seem to get his feet underneath him.

He heard about IPS Supported Employment at his mental health program and decided to try it. He met with Martin, an IPS specialist, who was genuine with him. "He's always very social," Robert said of Martin. "Even with all the people in the program he would tell you the reality. He would ask how you wanted to be introduced to employers."

Martin helped him get a job as a parking flagger at a local entertainment venue. The job opened new doors for Robert, and within two years he decided he wanted to work more, so he used the IPS program to find another job as a server in the food industry.

"I like doing things on my own. I use public transportation when I need to go somewhere, I can get home when I need to... I struggled with being self-sufficient. Now it feels like I'm a different person. It feels good."

He found he had more confidence in himself – he started to do a lot more at work and felt like he was doing better in his job.

His anxiety got better, he lost weight, and got an apartment by himself.

"I enjoy socializing with people I work



Four years ago Robert never would have thought he would have the confidence nor the ability to go back to school. Today he enjoys working and taking classes at his local college.

with, talking with co-workers on my break, walking into work and being able to tell that they're happy to see me," he said.

Robert continues to work with Martin and others at the supported employment program. He even goes back to the clinic and visits with people in the program outside of his scheduled appointments.

With the improvements in his life and to his self-confidence, Robert felt like it was once again time to take the next step.

"I enjoyed working and getting a paycheck but I wanted something more challenging," Robert said.

So back to IPS he went to get help going back to school.

"I'm in school right now. It's like I'm making up for high school, when I couldn't focus because of my mental illness. This is almost like a do-over."

The timing was right; he had saved up the money, and the opportunity was right there.

"I like doing things on my own. I use public transportation when I need to go

somewhere, I can get home when I need to... I struggled with being self-sufficient. Now it feels like I'm a different person. It feels good."

WHY ASSESS FIDELITY continued from page 1

the program. They suggest ways that staff can improve fidelity to the IPS approach.

Assessing fidelity is time consuming and labor intensive. Even when fidelity reviewers explain that fidelity feedback is developmental and not intended to be evaluative, it is human nature for IPS team members to feel evaluated. Given these concerns, it is natural to ask, "Are fidelity reviews worthwhile? Why do we need them?"

Yes! Fidelity reviews are worthwhile because they help IPS programs improve the quality of services, which in turn improves peoples' lives. Over a dozen studies have examined the relationship between IPS fidelity and employment outcomes and have consistently found better employment overall for programs with higher IPS fidelity.

Program improves using fidelity scale

BY Eric Lindstrom

Housing Options, Illinois

My background is in small business, so when I took this job, I felt it was important to have a business plan. The fidelity scale gave me a plan for program improvement. There is also frequent turnover in IPS specialist positions so I couldn't rely on anyone with a lot of tenure to teach me about IPS, but the fidelity scale served as a roadmap. As our program expands and we continue to hire, the fidelity scale gives new staff guidance about how to provide services in a way that is consistent with the rest of the team. I review the scale with new specialists to explain the rationale for the items and what needs to be done.

Our program recently reached exemplary fidelity. The scale helped us fine-tune what we do. We continue to discuss the scale to work on points that we have not fully implemented. For example, our IPS team provides employment services to people who receive mental health treatment at another agency. We used the fidelity scale to educate staff at the mental health agency about IPS. I believe we were the first in Illinois to reach exemplary fidelity while coordinating services between two agencies.

The fidelity scale also helps me inform agency leadership about what we are trying to do. We have a new interim executive director at Housing Options so I educated him about the evidence for IPS supported employment, why the fidelity scale exists, and why we try to adhere to the scale. I didn't have to try to justify how we operate because our approach is not based on my own opinions, but

"The fidelity scale served as a roadmap."

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT FIDELITY SCALE*			
Rater:	Site:	Date:	Total Score:
Directions: Circle one anchor number for each criterion.			
Criterion	Data Source**	Anchor	
Staffing			
1. <u>Caseload size:</u> Employment specialists have individual employment caseloads. The maximum caseload for any full-time employment specialist is 20 or fewer clients.	MIS, DOC, INT	1=	Ratio of 41 or more clients per employment specialist.
		2=	Ratio of 31-40 clients per employment specialist.
		3=	Ratio of 26-30 clients per employment specialist.
		4=	Ratio of 21-25 clients per employment specialist.
		5=	Ratio of 20 or fewer clients per employment specialist.
2. <u>Employment services staff:</u> Employment specialists provide only employment services.	MIS, DOC, INT	1=	Employment specialists provide employment services less than 60% of the time.
		2=	Employment specialists provide employment services 60 - 74% of the time.
		3=	Employment specialists provide employment services 75 - 89% of the time.
		4=	Employment specialists provide employment services 90 - 95% of the time.
		5=	Employment specialists provide employment services 96% or more of the time.

*Formerly called IPS Model Fidelity Scale
**See end of document for key

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT FIDELITY SCALE

on research.

In addition to supervising, I am also an IPS fidelity reviewer for the state. That has helped me improve our program. I observed that when another agency incorporated IPS documents into their electronic medical record it made the IPS specialists more efficient. That motivated us to streamline our documentation process. I also noticed the extra employer contacts our IPS specialists make each week, eight to ten rather than six, is paying off because our outcomes are higher than the average in Illinois. It helped me to know what was working well for us.

Vocational Rehabilitation perspective on fidelity

BY Teresa Barney Brandenburg

Kentucky Vocational Rehabilitation

As a Vocational Rehabilitation branch manager, I want to know that we are getting the services we purchase. Fidelity reviews ensure that programs provide services that are consistent with the supported employment approach. When I visit programs that have achieved different levels of fidelity, I can see that the programs with high fidelity scores work better than those with fair scores. We

want to help programs improve and fidelity is the best tool for that.

I am one of the fidelity reviewers in Kentucky and I've enjoyed visiting the programs to learn how they operate. I've noticed that the supervisors who are very involved in the IPS programs tend to have better fidelity and better outcomes, while supervisors with many other responsibilities at their agencies have more challenges developing strong programs. And it also seems that working closely with local Vocational Rehabilitation counselors is important. Our counselors attend monthly IPS team meetings and

keep in touch by phone between meetings. I have also observed, through doing fidelity reviews, that agency leadership and good integration with mental health are important for good quality services. All of the aspects of the fidelity scale translate into better services for people who want to work.

Currently, we are trying out the scale with programs for people who have substance abuse problems without other mental illnesses. It will be interesting to learn how the fidelity scale can apply to other populations of people and other programs.

Using the fidelity scale in a peer-run center

BY Abby Levinsohn

Pathways-The Wellness Co-op, Vermont

The Wellness Co-op is a peer-run community center operated by Pathways Vermont. The Wellness Co-op made the decision to implement IPS a few years ago in an effort to provide effective assistance to people who want to work. Fidelity reviews have helped improve how job supports are provided and how employment support staff builds relationships with employers. With this feedback the Wellness Co-op employment team improved the fidelity scores quite a bit over the past two years.



Peer-operated agencies don't always map onto fidelity in a perfect way. For example, The Wellness Co-op's employment team does not automatically connect to mental health agencies and does not attend mental health treatment team meetings each week. Instead, employment specialists connect with people's family supports, psychiatrists, treatment teams, and Vocational Rehabilitation based on each person's preferences. The relationships people form at the center provide additional employment supports. That's how the employment team often learns of people who want help with employment. The Wellness Co-op does not get high scores for integrated services on the fidelity scale, but accepts that is one area of the

Fidelity reviews are an important part of an agency's improvement process. Using the scale and the report that is generated from it as a tool to improve the quality of care for clients is the best proven way to deliver the Supported Employment model.

scale that is not compatible with the agency's philosophy.

Another difference between The Wellness Co-op and many mental health agencies is the capacity for employment staff to open up about their own stories and connect with people on a deep level. Staff help people, but the roles of helper and helpee are less accentuated. People are less likely to depend on employment specialists to do things for them or to feel that they need or want to be rescued. With the reduced power dynamic, it is easier to learn where people's passions lie

and what would give meaning to their lives. It is probably due to this emphasis that The Wellness Co-op achieves better scores in areas such as Individualized Job Search.

We plan to continue to have fidelity reviews each year and will continue trying to improve fidelity in areas that are consistent with our mission. It is very helpful to have a consistent framework for our employment services, just as The Wellness Co-op staff use a solid framework to think about the peer support work they do.

Tools for Fidelity

- ◆ *The Supported Employment Fidelity Scale.* To read and download the scale, go to www.dartmouthips.org and select Resources for Programs.
- ◆ *Supported Employment Fidelity Review Manual.* To read about the rationale for fidelity items, how to conduct fidelity visits, how items are scored, and to read a sample fidelity report, order the Fidelity Manual. Go to www.dartmouthips.org and select Order. The manual can also be downloaded on the Resources for Programs page of the website.
- ◆ *FAQs.* Go to the website above and select FAQs to submit a question about the fidelity scale or fidelity visits. We will respond to you directly.
- ◆ *Software for writing reports.* To purchase a one-year subscription to an online tool for writing reports, email Sarah.J.Swanson@Dartmouth.Edu
- ◆ *IPS Leadership Training.* A first step to becoming a fidelity reviewer can be to attend the IPS leadership training offered at Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Center twice each year. Email Deborah.R.Becker@Dartmouth.Edu for more information.

The International IPS Learning Community



Reviews inform state plans for technical assistance

BY Linda Guillorn

Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services, Connecticut

Fidelity reviews play an important role in Connecticut because they help us understand how to assist our IPS programs.

Once the reviews are finished for all of our programs each year, I look at the scores and compare them to last year's reviews to determine if programs increased or decreased scores on different fidelity items. It's a guide to which programs need help, and what type of technical assistance is needed. I also enter all of the scores for each fidelity item in a spreadsheet and total items to learn about trends in the state. During the last reviews, many programs had lower scores due to inadequate documentation. In response, the state IPS trainer will visit the programs to train them about how to document IPS services.

Fidelity reviews are not audits. It's about program improvement and sustainability. Most states have high rates of turnover in the

IPS specialist positions and we experience that in Connecticut as well. However, fidelity is a technical assistance tool to ensure that programs with turnover learn how to have better fidelity. If we do not monitor fidelity, program staff may drift from the evidence-based approach. In most cases, the programs with better fidelity scores have better outcomes. That's what it is really about—better employment rates and helping people get to work.

One of our challenges has been in maintaining a large enough pool of trained fidelity reviewers to keep up with all of our programs. We want every IPS program in the state to help with fidelity reviews by sending a supervisor or IPS specialist to participate in a review alongside people from the state IPS implementation team. One supervisor recently spoke about what an incredible learning experience it was for her to visit other programs as a reviewer. In the coming year, we will try to also include peer specialists from the IPS teams.

Dartmouth IPS Supported Employment Center

What's New

Now available—updated Fidelity Manual
An updated Fidelity Manual is now available to order or download on our website! Visit www.DartmouthIPS.org > Order

Career Profile updated

An updated version of the Career Profile, including an expanded education section, is now available on our website. www.DartmouthIPS.org > Resources for Programs > Program Tools.

Online IPS Supervisor Course offered in March

The online IPS Supervisor course will be offered again March 21, 2016. Registration for the course opened February 1, 2016. Go to our website and select Training & Consultation > Online Courses.

New online course available for state Vocational Rehabilitation counselors

A new course aimed at introducing Vocational Rehabilitation counselors to the IPS Supported Employment model is now available! The next course opens March 21, 2016. Registration for the

course opened February 1. Go to our website and select Training & Consultation > Online Courses.

Online IPS Practitioner Course offered in May

The Spring course begins May 30. Registration for this course opens April 11, 2016. Go to www.DartmouthIPS.org and select Training & Consultation > Online Courses.

Twice-yearly IPS Leadership training offered

The next training will be held in March. Registration for this event is full, but another training will be held in August, 2016. For more information, visit our website.

For more information,
visit our website
www.DartmouthIPS.org