

Employment Works!

Twice-yearly IPS Supported Employment/Education Newsletter

Spring 2021



Italy's IPSILON Steering Committee

Denise Manchisi, IPS Trainer, Italy

Italy officially created their committee in 2014 as a social promotion association called IPSILON, with the goal of creating a work group to promote and support the IPS model in Italy. The committee's intention was to expand the IPS model to more mental health centers in order to increase the number of people with mental health conditions who could take advantage of IPS in order to significantly improve their quality of life.

The committee has been responsible for promoting the IPS model, ensuring the quality of implementation, training new IPS employment specialists, organizing supervision meetings, providing consultation and assistance to sites implementing IPS, tracking and submitting IPS learning committee outcomes, and disseminating scientific information on the IPS model. The group is primarily composed of professionals working in the field of mental health. Professionals come from different Italian cities and include: directors of the department of mental health, directors of mental health centers, supervisors, trainers, social workers, psychiatrists, psychologists, and IPS employment specialists.

The committee has been essential in helping to coordinate the implementation of IPS in an organized way. It provides a process to respond to all training requests and coordinate local supervisor meetings in a fast and effective manner. The committee discusses implementation strategies and critical issues so that adherence to the model continues to improve. The steering committee has also been invaluable in strengthening the identity of the IPS model in Italy.

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IPS Employment Center Notes

Steering committees, which can also be called stakeholder or leadership groups, play an important role in IPS supported employment/education. Steering committees assist with implementation and sustainment of IPS programs by keeping stakeholders informed and involved, and they provide a way for programs to receive feedback from those stakeholders.

In this issue of *Employment Works!* we hear from a variety of stakeholder groups who are active on steering committees. Family members share their perspectives on why to include them on the team. People with lived experience advocate for an environment of openness and trust to get the best feedback. States and countries provide examples of how steering committees have improved their services.

We also share outcomes from 2020 in this issue. Outcomes remain strong despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

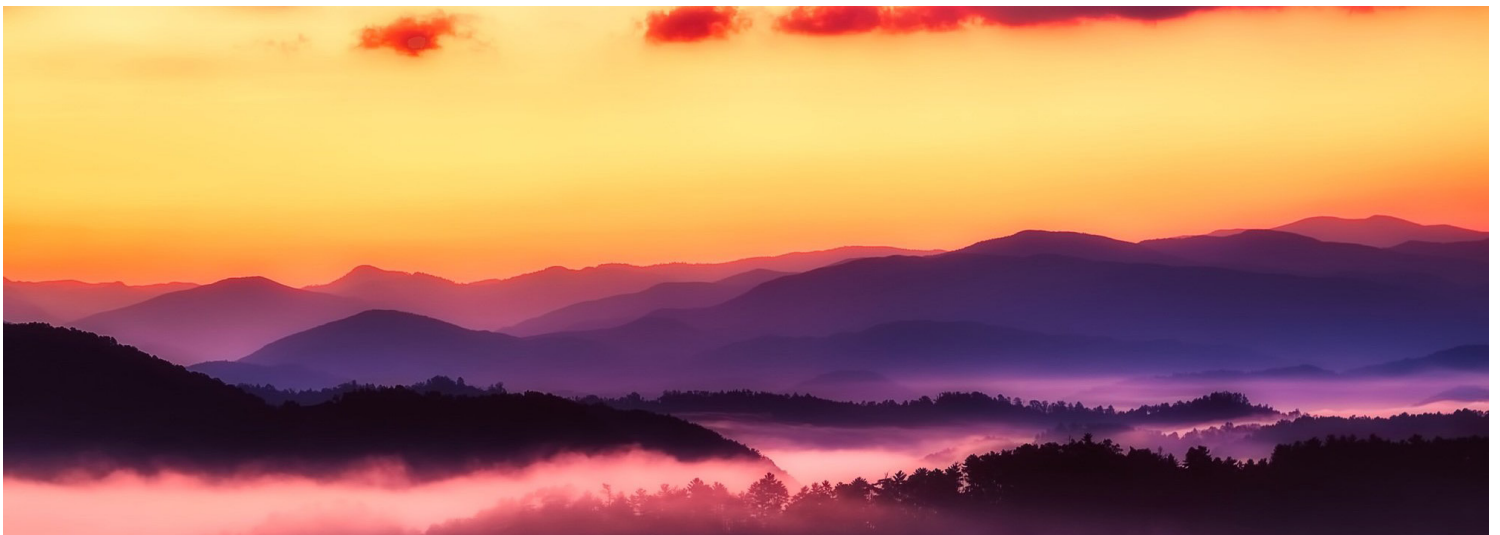
Spotlight on Tennessee's IPS TANF Pilot Program

Tennessee IPS

In October 2019, Tennessee's Department of Human Services, Division of Family Assistance and Child Support, and Division of Rehabilitation Services partnered with the state's Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services to launch Individual Placement and Support (IPS) for eligible Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients in Madison County. As the IPS provider, Pathways Behavioral Health became the first IPS site in Tennessee to harness TANF allocated funding for a full-time IPS specialist. The pilot program continues to thrive through strong collaboration between partners and their commitment to helping Tennesseans with mental health disorders achieve recovery through employment.

One client gained employment as a residential home trainer earning \$10.75 an hour. Her job duties include assisting with client care, cleaning, laundry, cooking meals, personal hygiene, toiletry assistance, driving to doctors' appointments and outings, and documenting client activities and behaviors during each shift, according to state requirements. She wrote the following poem about what her work journey has meant:

*I felt alone.
As if there was little to no hope.
My self-esteem was low.
The depression was setting in strong.
My frustration and emotions were all over the place.
Rapid mood swings consumed my day.
Every morning I would wake to greet the love of my life, my three children.
I would comfort them, pretending with everything I had.
Like any mother wanting to make her children feel loved, protected and secure.
Initially, I was frustrated and had no support but that quickly changed.
Little did I know, that everyone who had crossed my path (TANF Rep, VR Counselor and the Employment Specialist) in prior and present weeks were my chain of connections.
When I met my employment specialist, she was kind, patient, and she listened and understood me.
She supported me, and helped me.
A chain of hope, a listening ear, support and a chance for a new beginning.
I now feel that I have the support, job, and finances that are going to help me get on my feet.
Now, I see myself working toward getting a house for my children and me.*



Tips for Including People with Mental Illness on IPS Steering Committees

Alysha Clark, Certified Peer Specialist, Chrysalis, Wisconsin

People with lived experience need to be a part of all decision-making processes for mental health and substance use services. Without involving people who receive services in every part of the decision-making process, we cannot provide comprehensive, culturally sensitive, recovery-based services. But those who invite people with lived experience to join steering committees must be intentional and thoughtful. Take time to provide background information to all committee members about the history of IPS implementation in the state, what challenges have been overcome, who is part of the IPS implementation team, how they work with agencies and why, and what are the strengths and barriers that still exist in the system. Building relationships with each committee member individually is ideal even though it may be time consuming.

Explain how the meetings will be run and what each person's role is. Even if many people on the committee have this information, make sure that all committee members are on a level playing field. Explain that anyone can call or email you (the steering committee leader) to ask questions about IPS and content from the meeting, which could be phrased as having an "open door for questions/concerns, encouraging people to contact you anytime." Someone with lived experience may have less knowledge but we shouldn't make that assumption. Explain to all committee members how to raise your hand in Zoom, or when is an appropriate time to comment.

You may have difficulty engaging the member with lived experience in attending consistently, but it is not helpful to shame the person about not living up to their commitment. Rather, try to find out why and support however you can. You also want to emphasize the importance of them being on the committee. "You are important to this committee. We picked you for a reason, and we need your input when we make decisions because your voice is so valuable!"

Be prepared to listen. There is a balance between following the agenda and creating relationships, but effective committees are ones in which members know and trust each other. If someone needs to talk about a negative experience that may feel off topic, let that happen. This supports the committee to embrace whole people, whatever we show up with, and gives the message that we believe you! And you will probably learn what led them to talk about that, finding more creative/innovative ways of thinking about services.

To facilitate building trust, try creating a "Founding Agreements" document that you read in the beginning of each meeting with the group. This way

the committee has a say on how the meeting is conducted and how we want to be in the space with each other. For an example of this, feel free to email Alysha Clark (clark@workwithchrysalis.org).

Finally, learn from other states that have statewide leadership committees. How did they help all members be full members and are comfortable sharing their ideas, opinions, and experiences? And always be open to feedback about how to improve in the future. We will get it wrong sometimes, that is okay. The important thing is that we dedicate ourselves to repairing harm and then move on. This work is too important to let shame and self-esteem get in our way.

Involving People with Lived Experience in Leadership

Quanita McRoberts, State Youth Treatment Project Director, Ohio Mental Health & Addiction Services

The more you are removed from direct service in your work life, the more you need to connect with people served. You need to ask, "What is needed to help people recover?" "How are services informed with the consumer in mind?" We miss so many opportunities by not really being connected to people served.

Include more than one person with lived experience in leadership groups. Not just because you want to avoid tokenism, but also to level out the power dynamic. Peers need a sense of community. Even the word peer requires there to be at least two people. And when you ask people with lived experiences to participate in steering committees, pay them because their time is valuable. People need to be paid and not just with pizza or gift cards.

Hire peers to work in state departments and agencies. Get excited about knowing that a candidate has lived experience. Your staff needs to be diverse. You need to be intentional from the beginning of things and not just when you are writing grants. When you don't have conversations with people about how they are struggling and thriving, how people are making the best of their situations, and how services affect those things, then you lose touch with why you are doing the work.

Think about who is credible. It doesn't need to be about education only. Lived experience gives you an incredible viewpoint. Both viewpoints are needed. Some people do have both but may need to choose how professional they will sound if they talk about their lived experience. For me, I am passionate about the idea of exploring misdiagnosis of youth with oppositional defiance disorder because I think many youth may actually have PTSD. That happened to me. I knew what was going on in my household, but no one asked me about that. When I started working with youth I learned that when I came to them as a human wanting to earn their respect, they would talk to me. That came from my experience, but in some situations, I would need a formal education to back up my thoughts about misdiagnosis.

Statewide IPS Collaboration in Colorado

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If you spend some time in Colorado, you will find a coalition of leaders and stakeholders that truly care about IPS. "We are motivated by a love of the model and by what we have seen in the lives of the people we are working on behalf of," explains Deirdre Sage, IPS trainer with the Colorado Office of Employment First. Together, leaders from the Office of Behavioral Health, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Health Care Policy and Financing, and the Office of Employment First work to advance IPS in Colorado.

"We are motivated by a love of the model and by what we have seen in the lives of the people we are working on behalf of."

Their strong collaboration has produced impressive results. Three of the four agencies have dedicated IPS trainers who conduct fidelity reviews and lead staff trainings together. "We are always trying to work together and include each other," said Alia Andrews, an Office of Behavioral Health IPS trainer. All three trainers shared that their close communication helps them stay consistent in their messages to IPS providers and creative in their solutions to challenges that arise. "I can't imagine not being so closely partnered," said Rachel Hoard, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation IPS trainer.

The state IPS team worked together to improve Medicaid funding for

IPS. In close partnership with Health Care Policy and Financing, they identified additional Medicaid service codes that IPS providers can use.

"We are always trying to work together and include each other."

They offer training and education on billing for IPS services. They also developed a capacity-based protocol that delineates how providers can bill VR, Medicaid, and state mental health funds for the development of IPS. "Some organizations are still uncertain about the billing model, so we are continuously educating them about billing," shared Patricia Henke, the director of the Colorado Office of Employment First. All of the team's funding improvement efforts have paid off and now their IPS programs are breaking even or earning a profit.

The team is looking ahead to further expansion of IPS in Colorado, not just for people with mental health challenges but other disability groups too. Deirdre Sage captured the spirit of the Colorado IPS team: "If you really understand IPS, then you understand what it can do and the possibilities."



IPS Fidelity Review Course

Our newest course for individuals who plan to become fidelity reviewers for IPS programs, for those who want to sharpen their skills as reviewers, IPS supervisors and agency quality assurance managers who want to have a better understanding of the IPS fidelity scale, and those who want to learn more about IPS Supported Employment.

"Thanks for all your help. This course is EXCEEDINGLY helpful. The course was very detailed and thoughtful, and definitely helped orient me to become a better reviewer - which will in turn help translate (hopefully) to improved outcomes for the clients. It was definitely time well-spent!" - Katie McDonnell

For more information, visit

www.ipsworks.org/index.php/training-courses/the-online-ips-fidelity-course/

Oregon's Statewide IPS Steering Committee

Crystal McMahon, Director Oregon Supported Employment Center for Excellence (OSECE)

Oregon created their steering committee in 2008 when OSECE was first established. Stakeholders who attended the meetings at that time included several IPS program managers, state leads from mental health and vocational rehabilitation, Medicaid infrastructure managers, peers, benefits representatives, and other funders. Though Oregon first started implementing IPS in 2000, there was a second wave of new agencies that signed on to deliver IPS services in 2008 and they were in the early stages of implementation.

Sharing consumer success stories and transparency with employment outcomes and fidelity scores have always been a part of the culture of the steering committee.

The focus of the steering committee meetings was often on policy development, outcomes, funding, fidelity reviews and dealing with such issues as statewide shortage of Certified Work Incentives Counselors (CWIC's). Sharing consumer success stories and transparency with employment outcomes and fidelity scores have always been a part of the culture of the steering committee. Transparency has not only helped IPS programs to connect and learn from each other but keeps the Coordinated Care Organizations (CCO's) who help fund IPS informed of current trends.

Continued on page 5.



Alabama's Statewide Supported Employment Coordinating Committee (SECC)

Jessica Hales, Coordinator of Adult Mental Illness Services, Alabama Department of Mental Health

Alabama first started providing IPS services as a part of a SAMHSA Transforming Lives Through Supported Employment Grant in 2014/15. The grant required that the state establish a steering committee to help provide oversight and accountability and to ensure state buy-in. Additionally, having a steering committee is a good practice. Alabama joined the International IPS Learning Community in January 2015.

Initially, the committee was very instrumental in creating a strategic plan. The implementation rollout and guidance for what the state needed to focus on were drafted with the assistance of the committee members. The strategic plan included goals, strategies, and expected outcomes.

One of the advantages of participating on the committee was state agencies shared resources and knowledge with each other.



Progress on these items was reported at each SECC meeting. Members of the SECC represented a diverse group of stakeholders, including Alabama Departments of Mental Health and Vocational Rehabilitation, state consumer representatives, Tuscaloosa Veterans Affairs (VA) Hospital, Medicaid representation, Career Centers and other statewide labor force agencies, community mental health providers,

and IPS supervisors. One of the advantages of participating on the committee was state agencies shared resources and knowledge with each other. For example, the IPS teams developed a greater understanding of resources available at the Alabama Industrial Development Training Center and the VA became interested in learning about the role of peer support specialists.

Oregon's Statewide IPS Steering Committee continued

The committee has evolved with developing deeper relationships with their partners and stakeholders where partnerships had not existed. For example, the State Director of Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation has attended in-person meetings, the state mental health lead regularly attends steering committee meetings, and a new relationship has been formed with Disability Rights Oregon. One of the disability rights attorneys has shown an interest in IPS and has provided trainings to staff on subjects such as employer/employee rights during COVID-19. The state level administrators have started working more closely on behalf of IPS and are working together to tackle questions such as: can we do something to expand who receives IPS as well as organize a collaborative effort to pursue grants? There is a strong sense of support to develop the next steps in expanding supported education, employment and education services for youth, and serving more people with substance use disorders. The collaborative effort with administrators involved in IPS is the best it has ever been in the history of the steering committee. Now the question is, what's next?

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The committee also formed three workgroups, which included leadership, data/evaluation, and communications as a part of the strategic plan. These workgroups have been helpful in assisting the state with strategies to sustain and disseminate information. The communication workgroup recently finished developing a marketing toolkit which includes informational material for programs considering implementing IPS, brochures, and a video of a working IPS participant.

The SAMHSA grant concluded in 2019 and the SECC is still meeting quarterly. During this time, the committee has emphasized the Respect Initiative in which consumers learn to write and tell their recovery story. At least two consumers share stories, one recovery focused and one IPS focused, at every steering committee meeting.

Tips for Steering Committee Facilitators

How to help family members and individuals with lived experience feel like valued members of the committee.

Family Advocates for IPS Group, International IPS Learning Community

Family can be biological relations, good friends, neighbors, partners, spouses, and other supporters. Family is identified by each individual.

Consider who to invite

Some family members have concerns about IPS, for example, that individuals may lose entitlements or experience failure. They may benefit from joining the IPS steering committee. As a member of the committee, they can learn more about IPS, benefits, and employment. They can express their concerns to the committee in order to help other members understand what worries some family members. Additionally, these family members can help steering committee members address these issues as they promote IPS with different stakeholders.

Not everyone wants to volunteer. Some people worry about expenses related to parking and gas. But in some states, the department of mental health pays mileage for family members and consumers. And in some states, members have the option to join steering committee meetings by phone.

Statewide National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI) office staff may know of people in affiliates who would like to serve on local steering committees.

Prepare for the meetings

Family members who are knowledgeable about IPS may feel more comfortable expressing their opinions about the program. Spend time with family members in advance of the meeting to talk about IPS. Also, share information about IPS implementation in the state. Describe some of the barriers and facilitators to implementation or sustainment of the practice. Share outcomes from the programs (statewide).

Develop a clear agenda for each meeting. And send instructions for how to connect to the meeting in advance.

Advocacy training from National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI) could be helpful for families on steering committees. NAMI can help family members and people with lived experience learn how to share their stories.



Facilitate the meeting with family members and consumers in mind

A good topic for some meetings is to discuss how to train IPS specialists on engaging family members, and how to ask consumers about family involvement.

The facilitator should develop agenda items that encourage consumers and family members to participate. For example, ask them for tips on how to engage consumers in IPS, or how to involve family members in IPS program implementation.

Avoid using acronyms or shop talk that others may not understand. And include a list of acronyms in the agenda just in case.

Start the meeting by asking a couple of people who are working or going to school to talk about their experiences. Or ask family members to tell a story about someone in their life who is working. Share hope.

The meeting facilitator should help families and consumers feel comfortable about speaking up. She can also reach out to them after to ask how they felt about the meeting and whether the person was able to share what they wanted to share. "Can I call on you next time to ask for your comments."

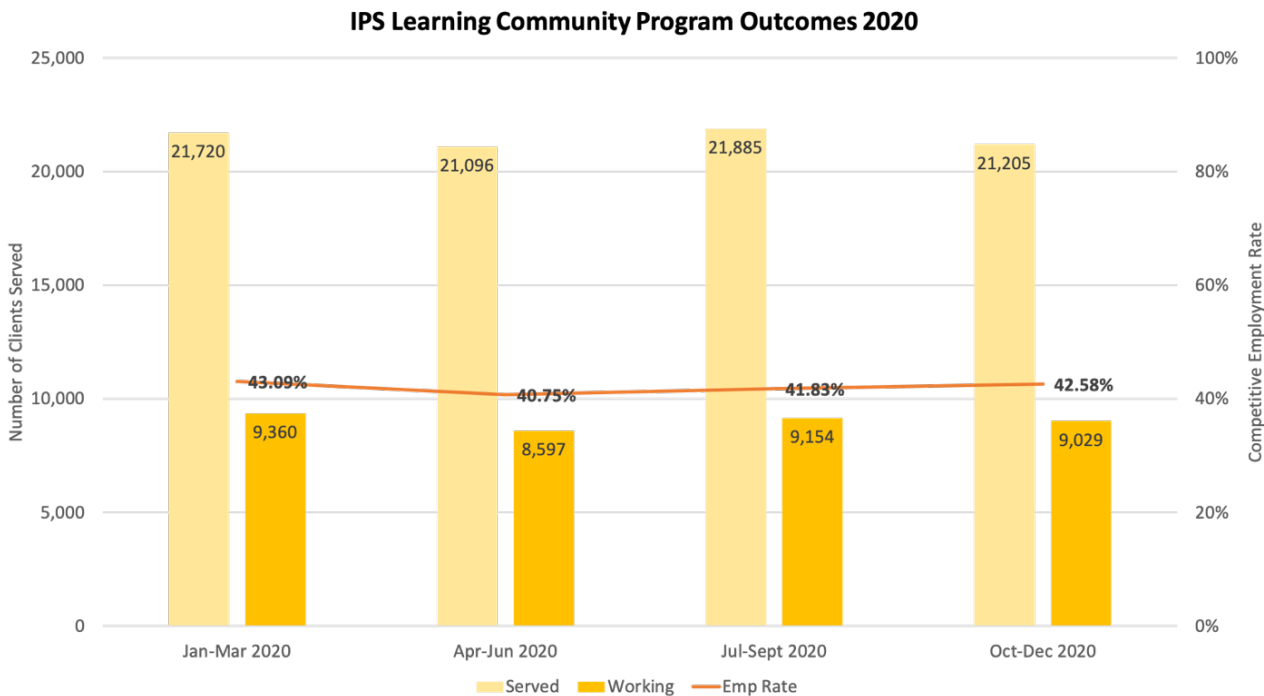
Start a meeting by explaining, "We should not plan services without hearing from people served and we are lucky to have so and so here willing to share their experiences." Describe how family (biological or not) is important for helping people with work and school. Explain why the career profile asks about family.

Other important roles for family members

Invite family members, including those serving on steering committees, to conferences and meetings about IPS. Demonstrate that family members are valued stakeholders for IPS. Consider planning a separate meeting for family members at conferences.

IPS Learning Community Program Outcomes in 2020

IPS Employment Center



The COVID-19 pandemic upended the labor market last year, with millions of people losing jobs. Surprisingly, IPS program participants continued to find and keep jobs at a fairly stable rate throughout 2020. Over 360 programs in the United States, Italy, and Montreal submitted

quarterly data to the IPS Employment Center last year and served approximately 21,000 people each quarter. For the 360 plus programs that shared data, the employment rate dropped 2.3 percentage points from January to June but regained 1.8 percentage points by the end of the year. Given US estimates that the unemployment rate for people with disabilities increased from 8% in 2019 to 13.4% in 2020 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021), we are pleased that IPS remains an effective method for meeting employment goals.

Upcoming Online Courses and Virtual Trainings

Practitioner Skills Course

- ◆ May 3 through July 23 (Units 1-8) or August 13 (Units 9-10). Registration is March 15 through April 16.

French Practitioner Course

- ◆ September 13 through December 3. Registration is August 2 through August 27.

Spanish Practitioner Course

- ◆ September 13 through December 3. Registration is August 2 through August 27.

IPS Supervisor Course

- ◆ July 5 through September 10. Registration is May 17 to Jun 18.

VR Counselor Course

- ◆ July 26 through September 6. Registration is June 14 through July 9.

NEW - Online IPS Fidelity Review Course

- ◆ May 10–June 25. Registration April 5 through April 30.

Virtual IPS Leadership Training

- ◆ May 4, 5, 6, 12, 13.

Virtual Young Adult Fidelity Review (IPS-Y) Training

- ◆ July 19 and 20.

To learn more about any of our courses, visit
www.ipsworks.org/index.php/training-courses/



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