# Core Principles

## SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT / INDIVIDUAL PLACEMENT & SUPPORT

*the evidence-based practice*

### An Integrated Approach

SE/IPS is an evidence-based practice that helps people with mental illness and other disabilities identify and acquire part-time or full-time jobs of their choice in the community with rapid job-search and placement services.

### WORK IS RECOVERY

SE/IPS emphasizes that work is not the result of treatment and recovery but integral to both.

*The core principles and practices of SE/IPS are briefly described on the back page.*

**CENTER FOR EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES**

**& its Ohio Supported Employment Coordinating Center of Excellence**

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# CORE PRINCIPLES | SE/IPS SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT / INDIVIDUAL PLACEMENT & SUPPORT

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## 1. ZERO EXCLUSION

All people who want to work are eligible for employment services and receive help even if they

- Have experienced job loss(es) in the past
- Lose a job(s) while enrolled in SE/IPS
- Are still experiencing symptoms of mental illness
- Experience cognitive impairments (e.g., memory, problem-solving difficulties)
- *Are still using alcohol or other drugs
- Have a criminal history
- Do not know how to fill out an application or talk to employers
- Do not have previous job training or work experience
- Are afraid they might not learn the job fast enough
- Are afraid they might not fit in with others

**The use of alcohol and other drugs may limit job choices because many employers test for drug use. If job applicants can pass a drug test, their choices of jobs typically increase.*

## 2. INTEGRATED EMPLOYMENT & TREATMENT

SE/IPS is integrated with (embedded in) mental health services. Employment specialists attend team meetings and work closely with case managers, psychiatrists, and other professionals to help people achieve their employment goals. Team members openly discuss and find solutions for issues that affect work and recovery, such as the following:

- Medication side effects (e.g., drowsiness)
- Persistent symptoms (e.g., hallucinations)
- Cognitive difficulties (e.g., problem-solving skills)
- Other rehabilitation needs (e.g., social skills, transportation, childcare)

## 3. COMPETITIVE JOBS

Competitive employment is the goal of SE/IPS services. Competitive jobs are *regular jobs* that anyone in the community can apply for. They are not jobs set aside for people with disabilities. Employment specialists help consumers of mental health services find regular part-time or full-time jobs that pay a minimum wage or more. Consumers are paid the same as other people who perform similar work. SE/IPS endorses competitive jobs for several reasons:

- Consumers like them more than sheltered work.
- They reduce stigma and discrimination by enabling consumers to work side-by-side with people who do not have psychiatric disabilities.
- They promote self-sufficiency, financial stability, and career development over time.
- They support positive self-worth.

## 4. RAPID JOB-SEARCH

As soon as people express an interest in employment, service team members connect them with employment specialists. In two to three weeks, specialists are helping consumers explore the job market, fill out applications, and interview with potential employers. Specialists do not require individuals to complete pre-employment assessments, training, workshops, and intermediate work experiences. A rapid job-search honors each person's desire to work.

## 5. SYSTEMATIC JOB DEVELOPMENT

Getting to know employers helps people find jobs that meet their strengths, needs, abilities, and preferences. Employment specialists build relationships with employers through planned in-person contacts over time. The face-to-face time enables specialists and employers to work together to find the right fit (or match). Employment specialists keep in mind the job preferences of the people they represent and ask about and listen for many different opportunities at each worksite. Specialists keep themselves attuned to the quality of work environments, the potential for flexible hours, and the potential for workplace adjustments that will accommodate individual strengths, skills, symptoms, and coping skills.

## 6. TIME-UNLIMITED SUPPORT

Follow-along services help people through their work and recovery journeys for as long as they want or need them. These supports are provided by employment specialists, case managers, other service providers, and by *natural supports*, including family members, friends, co-workers, and other peers. Examples of follow-along services include

- On-the-job supports (e.g., job coaching)
- Job transitions (e.g., to new roles within a business, to new jobs at different businesses)

The goal of time-unlimited support is to help individuals become as independent as possible.

## 7. CONSUMER PREFERENCES

Service providers keep their attention focused upon the employment goals of people they serve and do not impose their ideas or plans. Service providers utilize motivational approaches to help individuals identify their personal strengths, skills, and job interests. People who find jobs that *they* want tend to experience a higher level of satisfaction and tend to keep their jobs longer. Individual preferences guide all aspects of the employment process, such as

- Job searches
- Decisions to disclose personal issues to employers or not (e.g., disabilities, symptoms)
- Level of ongoing support from service providers

## 8. BENEFITS PLANNING

It is important for individuals to know how their jobs (earned income) might impact benefits such as Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), and housing subsidies. To help people make informed choices about their financial futures, employment specialists and other service providers learn the basics of benefits information. They also

- Help individuals understand benefits requirements (rules) and other regulations related to benefits & employment
- Help find benefits planners, who calculate the impact that income from employment will have upon various benefits
- Assist with reporting of income to different benefits providers
- Assist with identifying and documenting available work incentives

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**CENTER OF EXCELLENCE**

The Ohio Supported Employment Coordinating Center of Excellence (CCOE) is an initiative of the Center for Evidence-Based Practices at Case Western Reserve University.

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**NATIONAL CONNECTION**

SE/IPS was developed by researchers at the Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Center, which continues to study the effectiveness of this evidence-based practice.