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# Learning Community Call #3

## SOAR and IPS Integration

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**PRESENTED BY:**

SAMHSA SOAR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER  
POLICY RESEARCH ASSOCIATES, INC.

**UNDER CONTRACT TO:**

SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



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# Welcome Back!

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Kristin Lupfer, Project Director  
SAMHSA SOAR TA Center





## Agenda

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- Homework Review
- Today's Topics:
  - Integrated Referral Systems
  - Income Needs Assessment
  - Employment Readiness
- Group Discussion
- Homework Assignment
- Wrap-Up and Adjourn



## Logistics

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- Downloading materials
- Chat questions
- Group Discussions
- Q&A





## Homework Report Out

### Assignment:

- Talk with staff trained or to be trained about experience using the IPS method

### Report Out:

- State spokesperson will present findings (3 minutes maximum) to the group



## Strengths to IPS Implementation ARIZONA

- DB101 – AZ has the most comprehensive DB101 website in the nation
- SOAR & IPS will occur on the same campus, thus speeding up the referral process
- Evaluation of individuals based on their current ability, as well as their employment needs (not based on disability)
- SJW currently works with about 150 different employers that are passionate about the individuals served
- Having served the homeless population for over 28 years, SJW has the ability to conduct career profiles, discuss disclosure of disabilities, and develop interviewing skills, especially pertaining to gaps in employment, criminal history, etc.
- Reduce barriers at the clinical level for individuals to obtain employment (i.e. needing X amount of months of sobriety)



## Barriers to IPS Implementation ARIZONA

- May deter agencies from also referring to Voc Rehab
- The very common belief that one will lose all benefits upon returning to the workforce
- Access to integrated services, such as medical, mental health, and housing (a disconnect here could hinder the success of obtaining employment)
- Process will not work if Employment Specialists are not readily available (i.e. not present or too big of caseloads)
- May deter Employment Specialists from being more involved in the community (i.e. making employment-related connections)



## *Colorado IPS Strengths*

- IPS is focused on individual needs, and services are flexible and ongoing.
- Integration is helpful to treatment teams because the employment specialist can help with the client's recovery and with sharing information about the client's progress.
- Recovery occurs more quickly and more often for clients in IPS. Some clients have reported decreased substance use and decreased mental health symptoms, and some clients have been able to end clinical services completely after obtaining and sustaining employment due to the therapeutic nature of work. Some of these clients had been on clinical caseloads for long periods of time, and clinicians had predicted that some of those clients would never be employable.
- Job seekers are often more compliant with medications and therapy, which can further support their recovery.
- Being a part of a learning community within the state, across other states, and even internationally helps with growth, training, and technical assistance and helps sustain programs and improve fidelity.



## Colorado IPS Barriers

- Ensuring adequate training and buy-in throughout the mental health centers (not just the vocational teams) can be challenging due to high staff turnover and some staff who may be biased against employment. Agency standards and oversight issues can be hard to bypass at times. Executive Leadership buy-in at the agency is a crucial first step in implementing IPS.
- Adequate funding is a barrier. Colorado has implemented a Capacity Based Protocol to help agencies use braided funding from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Medicaid, and the Office of Behavioral Health, but there is still not enough funding for programs and there are substantial wait lists throughout the state.
- Individualized benefits counseling is limited. We have just 4 or 5 CWIC's in the state, so wait times for appointments can be up to 1-2 months.
- Getting qualified Employment Specialists is a challenge because the salary range is relatively low. In most areas of the state, especially in rural areas, we have vacancies at many times throughout the year, and it is difficult to fill the positions let alone get qualified people to even apply.



## CONNECTICUT

### ▶ Barriers to Implementing IPS

- ▶ Short Term (9 month) interaction
- ▶ Job Development/Employer Relationships Time Intense
- ▶ IPS assumes Clinical - CABHI Services not Clinical
- ▶ People need Job/Skill Training

### ▶ Strengths with using IPS

- ▶ Competitive Jobs in the Community
- ▶ Employment Promotes Stability
- ▶ CTI Emphasizes Connection to Existing Supports in Community
- ▶ Clients Motivated to Work

## Individual Placement Support (IPS)

### **Illinois State Level Strengths:**

- Excellent DRS successful outcomes – 72%
- Access to IPS is rapidly expanding
  - Includes justice involved, youth/young adult, co-occurring, and immigrant populations
- Partnership between DMH, DASA, and DRS [VR] is strong
- Strong Region-based IPS Technical Assistance/Training
- J&J/Dartmouth Learning Collaborative and online courses
- Annual fidelity reviews with targeted reviews as indicated
- Strong and widespread stakeholder support
- Web-based data system

### **Illinois State Level Barriers:**

- Funding is largely outcome-based
- State Agencies charged with putting citizen of Illinois back to work are still “learning to collaborate on IPS”
- We don’t know the real cost of providing the service?
- 60% of those enrolled in IPS never get a job
  - High Employment Specialist (40%) and Supervisor (44%) turnover
  - Engagement issues
- Rapid expansion strains resources for training and fidelity monitoring
- Low penetration at implementing agencies

## Illinois CABHI -States-Enhancement

### **IPS Agency Level Strengths:**

- Caseload sizes are where they should be (for the most part)
- Vocational generalists (only voc. services conducted by ESs)
- Diverse job types and employers
- Job development (face-to-face and quality) and rapid job searches (well within 1 month of program entry for many)
- Competitive employment (no job enclaves or workshops for placements)
- Collaboration with VR (in terms of face to face meetings per fidelity)
- Disclosure documentation and conversations
- Creative sharing of back to work success stories

### **IPS Agency Level Barriers:**

- Capacity (enough staff for demand is not met); wait lists
- Staffing (turnover of ES and Supervisors)
- Vocational Unit (absence of strategic planning to grow program staffing to support # of referrals)
- Structure for Program to promote sustainment and growth
- Clinical integration (meaningful, strengths-based dialogue, consistent meetings with team, assignment to 2 primary teams only, overall joint ownership of outcomes)
- DRS partnerships (communication issues sometimes, lack of flexibility)
- Limited or no field mentoring by some IPS Supervisors, planning-identification-tracking-monitoring of individual staff targets/goals
- External referral partnerships and fidelity items of exclusion, measuring rate of competitive employment, intake/annual paperwork with inquiries of work interest/desire
- Updates of key documentation when changes occur due to the evolution of the client’s work preferences through job exploration (voc. Assessment on-going, job search plan updates, retention plan updates)
- Career laddering and moving beyond initial job placement to continued growth and supports for next step up job/career
- Time unlimited retention supports (sometimes shortened due to capacity issues)

## Illinois CABHI -States-Enhancement

## Implementation of IPS

- **Strengths:**
  - Previous experience utilizing most elements of IPS model
  - Dedicated Supported Employment Specialist on team
  - All staff value importance of work
- **Barriers:**
  - Employment added in third year of grant as enhancement
  - Some clients geographically out of reach
  - CTI time frames difficult for employment

Massachusetts CABHI-IPS



## CABHI SOAR/IPS - Michigan

## Strengths to Implementation of IPS

- Highly knowledgeable management
- Some staff have years of experience with IPS or other supported employment
- Staff are dedicated to the principles of IPS
- High level of collaboration between IPS staff and housing case management staff

## Barriers to Implementation of IPS

- Transportation is often a barrier – Michigan does not have a robust public transit system anywhere in the state
- Criminal history – maintaining relationships with employers who will hire individuals with criminal history



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Mississippi

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Nevada

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## IPS/EMPLOYMENT OHIO

### **How are you meeting the requirements of employment for the grant?**

- Supported Employment Specialist works with Critical Time intervention specialist to place clients interested in employment
- Consumers employment interests, readiness, skill set and CTI assessments are used for potential placement

**If you have an IPS team within your agency is your team connected with the IPS Team to meet the CABHI Grant employment requirements?**

- Utilizes two full-time Job Developers, who are tasked with interfacing with potential employers in the community and identifying job leads
- Utilizes vocational alternatives which provides employment readiness programs and a transitional work program

## IPS Implementation Strengths in Tennessee

- The state started implementing IPS 3 years ago
  - An established statewide IPS trainer to provide assistance to all sites
  - Annual IPS conference to provide networking opportunities and education
  - Some CABHI agencies had established IPS teams already in place
- Individuals are usually highly motivated to find work due to lack of income which they need to provide themselves basic things (food, clothing, shelter)
- The rapid job search model has been a strength in being able to assist clients with finding employment.
- The program is centered on client choice, with zero exclusion
- The program helps clients address and resolve their own barriers.

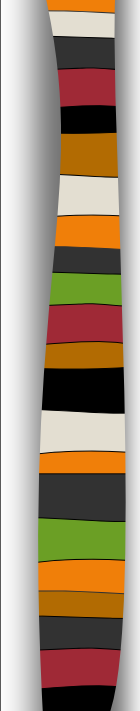
## IPS Implementation Barriers in Tennessee

- Clients access to reliable transportation to their work.
- Continued stigma held by some employers towards mental health.
- Individuals not wanting to work or thinking they can't work due to their disability
- Individuals already participating in VA employment services
- Individuals concerned about their SSI application or losing their SSI benefits if they go back to work
- Individuals we serve are usually extremely independent, so they are not always interested in the follow along job supports that come with IPS
- Housing needs of some CABHI participants

## CABHI Salt Lake City, Utah Barriers and Strengths in Using IPS

### Barriers

- Many issues to address before rapid employment. The need for permanent housing, medical issues, stabilization on medications, nutrition, clothing, benefit planning.
- Getting substance abuse issues in control before placing them in employment.
- Criminal background record quite extensive.
- We do not have a team of employment specialist on our CABHI team. IPS model is designed to have a team of employment specialist. Case managers/vocational specialist are pulled in many directions.



## Strengths

- IPS has been very successful in working with people with most severe disabilities in the homeless population.
- Supported employment is integrated with CABHI.
- Competitive Employment.
- Consumers are not excluded because they are not “ready” or because of prior work history, hospitalization history, substance use, mental health symptoms, etc.

### Strengths – IPS/SOAR/VORP WI

- Existing WI IPS Learning Collaborative with 30+ sites and system in place for technical assistance, training and fidelity monitoring
- Cadre of providers that are familiar with IPS in most of the SOAR/VORP counties in Northern WI.
- Existing system of braided funding which allows for DVR funding for job related training and skill development and MA funded psychosocial rehabilitation for symptom related supports.

## Weaknesses – WI IPS/SOAR/VORP

- Relatively small number of consumers over a large geographic area. Could make integration difficult.
- Multiple systems to negotiate and coordinate – WI VA, WI DVR, SOAR Outreach Specialists, DHS Mental Health Programs, etc.
- No identified Employment Specialist(s) for the team and consumers as of now.



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## Topic #1: Integrated Referral System

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Kristin Lupfer, SOAR TA Center





## What We Know...

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- Many people with serious mental illness, substance use disorders, or co-occurring substance use and mental disorders, who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, want to work and can work
- When determining disability, SSA does not consider how an applicant would function in a job with supportive services such as IPS or even job accommodations provided in the Americans with Disability Act (ADA)



## What We Know...

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- SOAR principles include:
  - SSI/SSDI benefits are a stepping stone to recovery
  - Respects individual choice
  - Offers benefits planning, e.g.) SSI/SSDI and employment to maximize both earned and unearned income
- IPS principles include:
  - Open to anyone who wants to work
  - Client preferences guide decisions
  - Benefits planning to maximize earned income and unearned income





## SOAR and IPS Programs: Join Forces

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What do we need to do to create an integrated system?

1. Build on shared principles: employment services and mental health services are integrated, trained staff discuss possibility of work early, offer benefits planning, etc.
2. Cross-training in both SOAR and IPS
3. Promote within coordinated access system for assessment and referrals
4. Establish buy-in across service delivery system



## Group Discussion

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## Topic #2: Income Needs Assessment

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Jen Elder, SOAR TA Center



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### Income Needs Assessment

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- Purpose: Policies and tools to initiate client conversations about work and SSA disability benefits
  - Address desire, client goals, uncertainties, and dispel myths and misinformation
  - Assess eligibility for SOAR while discussing employment options
- Goal: Connect two targeted client groups, SOAR and IPS service recipients, who are looking to maximize income
  - Ex: SSI/SSDI income with competitive employment income





## Income Needs Assessment

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- Primary Source of financial support, if any
  - Personal income, family and friends, public support (welfare, SSI/SSDI, VA)
- Living Arrangements
  - Literally homeless or at-risk for homelessness, current income needs to stabilize in housing
- Employment Goals and History
  - Desire to work, knowledge of work supports and SSA work incentives, weekly earnings, hourly rate, hours



## Income Needs Assessment

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- Physical and mental health conditions
  - Impacts on the client's ability to work (both in the past and currently)
- Challenges with ADLs, social functioning, concentration/memory and ability to complete tasks
  - Could signal eligibility for SSI/SSDI
  - Addressing these challenges is key in finding the most appropriate employment supports and placement
- Case Management Goals
  - Willingness to engage in intensive, income-focused case management





# Group Discussion

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# Topic #3: Employment Readiness

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Pam Heine, SOAR TA Center





## Employment Readiness

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- The concept of employment readiness
- The factors contributing to employment readiness
- The importance of assessing and developing employment readiness

(Section adapted from *"Readiness Assessment and Development: Supporting People to Choose Employment"*: Melissa Roberts, Ph.D., CPRP, Integrated Employment Institute, Department of Psychiatric Rehabilitation, UMDNJ)



## Employment Readiness

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READINESS ≠ ABILITY  
READINESS = INTENT





## Rehabilitation Readiness

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- Rehabilitation Readiness:
  - Interest and willingness to engage in process toward accomplishment of a goal
  
- Domains
  - Living, Learning, Working, Social

(Farkas, Soydan, & Gagne, 2000)



## Readiness Factors

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- **Felt Need:** Level of dissatisfaction with current circumstances
  
- **Self-Awareness:** What I know about myself as a worker
  
- **Commitment:** Belief that work is possible and positive
  
- **Environmental Awareness:** What I know about options and expectations of the world of work





## Readiness Factors for a SOAR Applicant

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- **Felt Need:** Happy going to program
- **Self-Awareness:** Symptoms will interfere, work is too stressful
- **Environmental Awareness:** Afraid employer won't hire them
- **Commitment:** Afraid of losing benefits, doctor said I can't work



## Purpose of a Readiness Assessment

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- To identify goals
- To identify obstacles to engaging in a goal directed change
- To select services and activities that develop readiness (i.e. remove obstacles) in specific areas of need





## Psychiatric Rehabilitation Readiness Determination Profile (PRRDP)

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- Question: *Has anyone received training in the use of this instrument? If so, would you share your experience?*
- Semi-structured interview
- Examines factors
- Consensus ratings (1 to 5) in each factor
- Results in person specific profile



## (PRRDP)

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Sample questions for SOAR Applicant

- **Felt Need:** Can you describe your current job, or lack of job? Have you thought about changing this situation?
- **Self-Awareness:** What kind of work would you like to do? What kind of co-workers and supervisor do you like to have? What is important to you in a job?





## (PRRD) continued...

- **Commitment:** What would be beneficial about going to work? Is there a downside to going to work? Do the benefits outweigh the downside?
- **Environmental Awareness:** What are some of the things an employer may expect from you? What are some of the responsibilities you've had in your jobs in the past?



## How can I support SOAR Applicants in believing that employment is possible?

- Ask about employment goals
- Examine benefits of employment (financial, social, medical)
- Relate employment to person's goals
- Access new experiences that use and/or build new skill, and identify interests (jobs, job shadowing, job sampling)
- Connect with IPS case managers to invite peers who have succeeded to speak







## How can I support SOAR Applicants in believing that employment is possible?

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- Listen to concerns and fears individual may feel about employment
- Bring accurate information to address these concerns (SSA work incentives, symptom management strategies) and work to remove any barriers
- Talk about supports the person may need and the sources of support that are available, e.g.) IPS, benefits planning



## Group Discussion

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# Homework Assignment

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Jen Elder, SOAR TA Center



## Homework

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- Draft/modify a tool for assessment and referral
- Send your state's assessment/referral tool (and 1-2 slides with information about your process) to Jen Elder ([jelder@prainc.com](mailto:jelder@prainc.com)) by close of business Wednesday, May 25<sup>th</sup>
- States will present findings (3 minutes maximum) to the group on the next call





## Wrap-Up and Adjourn

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- Questions or Comments?
- Next call: May 26, 2016 3:00-4:30pm EDT
- Thanks for your participation!

