



### INDIVIDUAL PLACEMENT AND SUPPORT (IPS)

The IPS (Individual Placement and Support) operating model was developed in the early 1990s for the rehabilitation of people with moderate to severe mental health problems. The evidence-based IPS operating model supports rehabilitants in returning to work in the open labour market as quickly as possible.

## IPS rehabilitation promotes work participation

Mental health disorders are one of the most common causes of long-term sick leave, disability pensions, interrupted and unstable careers and exclusion from the labour market. Vocational rehabilitation supports the ability to continue at work and its aim is to find a meaningful and personalised path back to working life, taking into account the rehabilitant's existing skills, experience and health.

### PREREQUISITES FOR SUCCESSFUL IPS VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION



#### The rehabilitant's attitude and motivation to return to work.

The rehabilitant's own desire and motivation to return to work as well as a positive attitude towards successful rehabilitation promote the transition to working life.

#### The rehabilitant's high-quality care and adequate health.

The rehabilitant needs high-quality care and continuous care contacts. In addition, the rehabilitant's own health must be such that they have

sufficient resources for rehabilitation. Rehabilitation should be arranged in a timely manner.

#### The IPS coach's skills and professional competence.

It is important for the IPS coach to familiarise themselves with the IPS model in depth and adopt the model's working-life focus. The coach provides the rehabilitant with comprehensive support and is actively in contact with potential employers. The IPS coach helps the rehabilitant find their strengths and a job that is suitable for their health as well as remove obstacles to work participation.

#### A diverse network supporting the rehabilitant.

Good network co-operation is important for achieving a common understanding and common goals. If necessary, the IPS coach co-operates with the rehabilitant's friends and family as well as various stakeholders.

#### Continuity of the rehabilitant's financial livelihood.

Livelihood during rehabilitation should be adequate and regular so that the rehabilitant can concentrate on rehabilitation. The IPS coach helps and advises on issues related to support and allowances.

## IPS REHABILITANTS



# 52%

were employed in the open labour market after rehabilitation



# 48%

of employment relationships were permanent



# 80%

worked full time

(Source: Varma Tietoa työkyvystä 3/2024)

## What do we know?

Employment is particularly challenging for people with serious mental health disorders. For example, the employment rate of people with schizophrenia is significantly lower than on average; in Finland, it is lower than in many other European countries (Hiekkala-Tiusanen et al. 2019). The IPS operating model has proven to be an effective method for promoting the return to work and work participation among people with mental health disorders (e.g. Bond et al. 2023; de Winter et al. 2022).

## Why is this important?

Of the disability pensions granted in 2023, a total of 32 per cent were based on mental health issues (Finnish Centre for Pensions, 2024). Rehabilitation of people with partial work ability, enabling their return to working life is beneficial for both the individual and society. Paid work enhances the rehabilitant's functioning, boosts their self-esteem and self-confidence, increases feelings of inclusion and meaningfulness and often also improves the financial situation. With the right and adequate support, even those with serious mental health disorders can participate in working life and make a valuable contribution to society.

## What should be done?

When planning vocational rehabilitation, it is important to consider not only appropriateness but also the rehabilitant's own desire and motivation to return to working life. It is also essential to make sure that the mental health rehabilitant receives adequate care and has the necessary resources so that it can be ensured that rehabilitation takes place at the right time and that it is possible to return to working life. Co-operation between the rehabilitant, their friends, family and support network and the IPS coach is key to achieving a common understanding and common goals. The rehabilitant's adequate and regular livelihood during rehabilitation also helps to concentrate resources on rehabilitation. It is of paramount importance that the workplace responds quickly to any challenges that the rehabilitant may have and offers support.

The rehabilitant's own desire to return to working life, the support from an IPS coach and network co-operation are prerequisites for successful IPS rehabilitation.



### HOW THE WORKPLACE CAN SUPPORT SUCCESSFUL REHABILITATION

- Give the rehabilitant the opportunity to try out returning to work in small steps.
- Respond quickly to any challenges that may arise for the rehabilitant and provide support as needed.
- Build a good and trusting relationship between the immediate supervisor and the rehabilitant.
- Enable a culture of open dialogue that makes the workplace psychologically safe.
- Work in close co-operation with occupational health care to monitor the rehabilitant's work ability.

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#### HOW THE BUSINESS BRIEF WAS MADE:

The prerequisites for the successful use of the IPS operating model are based on a publication in Varma's publication series "Tietoa työkyvystä" (in Finnish), which describes the results of an IPS pilot project adapted to vocational rehabilitation.

Read the publication (in Finnish) [on our website](#).

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