

SEAN'S STORY

Sean A. Henry

I came to Beacon Health (in Mentor, Ohio) in part because I was unemployed and wanted to find a job. By meeting with an employment specialist from the IPS program, I started to take small steps. And now I have a job I love. Trying a few jobs and going through STNA (State Tested Nurse Aide) training gave me the experience and skills to now work full-time at a nursing home. I love the interaction I have with the residents and the staff while I assist the residents with showering/bathing, feeding, transferring, and hygiene. I get lots of support from my employment specialist but also from my psychiatrist and therapist.



Before coming to Beacon Health, I was unemployed and spent most of my time hanging out with friends. But then I decided I wanted a paying job. My employment specialist at Beacon Health helped me think about a job that I would really like. I had previous experience at a Senior Center working in the kitchen and also in maintenance. What I liked at the Senior Center was being around elderly people. Because I like elderly people it seemed like a good idea to get training to work in a nursing home. My employment specialist referred me to Lifeline, which is a community action agency in Lake County. They paid the tuition for me to complete STNA training, which was full-time and lasted two weeks with a clinical experience at a nursing home for two days. I passed the written test and practical test to receive my certification. After graduation, my employment specialist and I started a job search and I was hired at a nursing home. But I left the job after one month because I realized that I needed more skills and experience. It wasn't a good fit.

Trying a few jobs and going through STNA (State Tested Nurse Aide) training gave me the experience and skills to now work full-time at a nursing home.

In order to have a successful life, you must first overcome the challenges that have confronted you. In order to overcome those challenges, reach out to those around you and walk together as one.

My employment specialist helped me to get a job at a home health aid agency where I worked for two years. After working there, I felt confident and prepared to find a full-time job at a nursing home again. My employment specialist and I started another job search. I have been working full-time at a nursing home since March 14 of this year. I love my job. I haven't taken a vacation yet, but I am accumulating paid time off with each pay period. I have days when I don't feel motivated. But in order to have a successful life, you must first overcome the challenges that have confronted you. In order to overcome those challenges, reach out to those around you and walk together as one. *(continued on page 2)*

IPS AND SUPPORTED EDUCATION

Luana Turner, Psy.D.

University of California, Los Angeles

Making decisions about education programs is the first step in helping people with education. I discuss each person's short and long-term work preferences and share information about local options including General Educational Development (GED) or diploma programs, trade schools, community colleges and four-year colleges. I also include information about financial assistance. I talk with each person and the school counselor about internships and work experiences to enhance their resumes before they graduate. *(continued on page 2)*

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SEAN'S STORY *(continued from cover)*

Sean's employment specialist, Marlaina, remarked that the home health aid agency was so sad that he was resigning after he was hired by the nursing home that they tried to talk him out of it. They came to an agreement with Sean that he would make himself available to work there on an as needed basis. Marlaina said, "Through the STNA training Sean has been able to advance his career. He is passionate about his work and is doing a fantastic job." His therapist, Erin, added, "Sean has taken small steps and has been open to trying different things. I have seen him grow a lot."

THE ROLE OF SUPPORTED EDUCATION IN IPS

Help with education and training programs is a regular service offered by IPS programs and includes the following criteria:

1. The school or training program is not set-aside for people with disabilities. These programs are open to any person who meets their academic and financial requirements.
2. The education program is related to an employment goal. If a person wants to take a class for personal enrichment, the mental health practitioner can provide education supports. Typically, IPS resources are limited and are reserved for those who wish to work.
3. The person requires the intensive supports of an IPS program. Those who only need some encouragement to succeed can receive support from a mental health practitioner.

IPS AND SUPPORTED EDUCATION *(continued from cover)*

We also discuss job placement assistance available through the school. Working with Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) to learn about the job market related to the person's interests is another helpful strategy to ensure that school leads to employment. One person wanted to attend a famous, expensive culinary school, but VR offered to pay for a much less expensive trade school. This person opted to begin her education at the trade school, and eventually transferred to the more prestigious school. VR continued to provide the same level of financial assistance as they had for the trade school, which lessened the student's financial burden.

Some people want to begin with a full load of classes, but many students succeed by starting slowly and gradually increasing their course loads. I suggest starting slowly to improve the chances for success. Auditing a course is a method a few people choose to evaluate their study skills and need for supports.

Disabled Student Services (at institutions for postsecondary education) provide accommodations for students who have registered for their services. One person who had problems with concentration received help with note taking and extra time to take exams. Recently a student experienced psychotic symptoms, but did not want to take a break from school. With that person's permission I wrote a letter explaining that the student was enrolled with Disabled Student Services, and I requested homework for missed classes. Some schools require that students enroll with Disabled Student Services prior to the beginning of the term. I encourage everyone to enroll just in case they end up needing the services. I explain that professors will not be told about the type of disability students have and I describe the types of accommodations that are possible.

GED and other high school diploma programs are less structured. Students have a classroom schedule, but while in class they work independently much of the time. I often meet with instructors to request accommodations, for example, allowing students to take the study books home. I ask instructors to let me know what sections the students are working on and request extra assignments when a student is struggling with a subject. I also help students develop study techniques such as using flashcards or highlighting reading material.

I recommend that employment specialists visit schools in their areas and build relationships with people in the Disabled Student Services office, as well as instructors in GED and diploma programs. Supported education includes active involvement and encouragement from an employment specialist.

EDUCATION AND IPS

Ali Peterson, MPH

Dartmouth Medical School

Dartmouth researchers Ali Peterson and Ellen Meara analyzed data from a nationally representative sample of over 77,000 working-age adults. They compared employment outcomes by mental illness severity and used complex modeling techniques (logistic regression models) to determine what factors are associated with employment status. Education status was the strongest predictor of employment regardless of mental health status, stronger than recent general health, substance use, and criminal justice involvement.

Perhaps this relationship is to be expected. Most of us appreciate the link between education and career advancement. Yet, we were surprised to find that the link between education and mental illness severity is strongest among people with serious mental illness. In other words, the impact of a college degree may be greater for someone with a serious mental illness than someone without. Why would this link be stronger for people with serious mental illness? It may be that educational achievement overcomes stigmatizing expectations of disability. Or, perhaps, educational achievement is a proxy for positive characteristics, such as persistence. Longitudinal research is needed to explore these and other explanations.

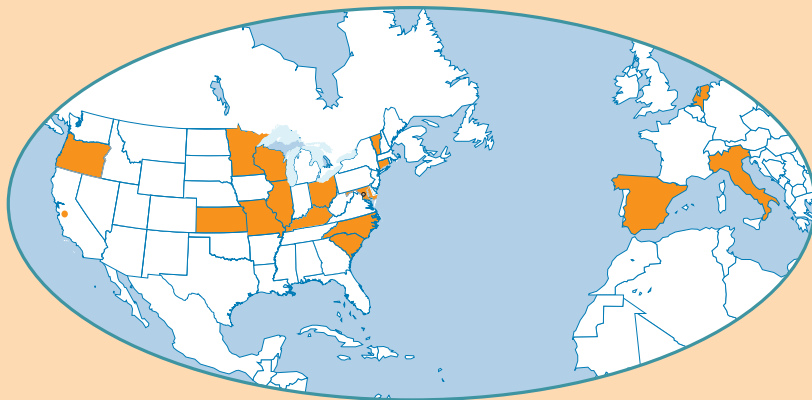
Regardless of why this relationship exists, these data indicate that, if we are to reduce the major disparity in employment that remains between people with and without mental illness, we should encourage IPS clients to pursue their educational goals as part of the supported employment services. Researchers at Dartmouth recently met to discuss the state of the science to determine how we can use information about the importance of education to enhance supported employment services. We carefully reviewed the literature. Although supported education has been part of the dialogue among rehabilitation specialists since the 1990s, it has not yet crystalized into one model. It appears that rigorous randomized controlled trials in this area are rare and conflicting. Compare this to the 17 controlled studies that favor IPS supported employment!

Looking forward, to best support people in achieving their educational and employment goals, there is a strong need to define supported education principles, outcome measures, and fidelity scales. We look forward to communicating new evidence in these areas as they are reported.

IPS services are clearly effective in overcoming employment disparities. Our national survey analysis shows that incorporating supported education into these services may reduce employment disparities even further.

IPS LEARNING COLLABORATIVE GROWS

The state of North Carolina and Catalonia, Spain have joined the 14 other states/regions in the U.S. and the two countries in Europe.



Dartmouth College
Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Center
Rivermill Commercial Center
85 Mechanic Street, Suite B4-1
Lebanon, NH 03766

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JOHNSON & JOHNSON - DARTMOUTH COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM 2013 AWARDS



Caption: Lou Kurtz, Kentucky Division of Mental Health, introduces Cathy Epperson, Executive Director NAMI Kentucky, who accepted the Family Advocacy for IPS Award for the Kentucky family state team at the annual meeting of the Johnson & Johnson - Dartmouth Community Mental Health Program in Madison, Wisconsin on June 5.

Achievement Award

Locust Street Resource Center and Vocational Rehabilitation, Carlinville, IL

Transformation Award

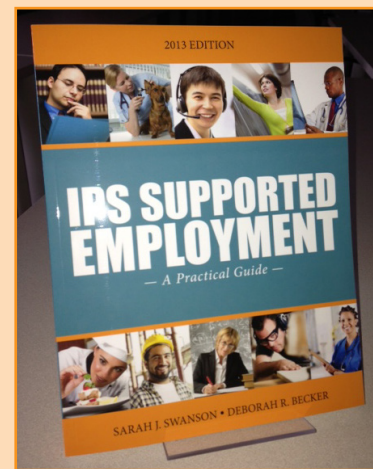
*Collaborative Support Programs of New Jersey, Inc., Freeport, NJ
Klamath County Mental Health and Vocational Rehabilitation, Klamath Falls, OR*

Family Advocacy for IPS Award

Kentucky IPS Family Project Team Award

Agencies received a cash award and an engraved crystal bowl.

NEW RESOURCE



The updated IPS supported employment manual and other resources are available through the Dartmouth IPS Supported Employment Center, as part of Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Center. <http://sites.dartmouth.edu/ips>

INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE?

Information about IPS (Individual Placement and Support), the evidence-based practice of supported employment is located at <http://sites.dartmouth.edu/ips>.