

**VR Counselor IPS Team Liaison
Fidelity Review Questions
Gene Oulvey, Ph.D.**

The intent of the VR interviews is to determine where technical assistance efforts could enhance the effectiveness of the role of VR staff in supporting and contributing to IPS services. Information gathered in the VR interviews can be incorporated into the general SE fidelity review report or form the content of a separate report.

It is common that interviewees give information that responds to questions that might be asked later in the interview. It is left to the interviewer's discretion as to whether to ask the later questions to elicit additional information.

The Prompts in some questions are intended to assist the interviewee in forming responses and are used at the discretion of the interviewer.

Questions

- How large is your current caseload? How many persons with severe mental illness are part of your caseload? How many of that group is receiving IPS services? How many are currently receiving IPS services from (IPS community agency)? To what other vocational programs or services do you refer persons with severe mental illness on your caseload?

- Describe the (IPS community agency) IPS program. How is it different than other vocational programs with which you work?

- What is your role with the IPS program of (IPS community agency)? Please describe how you coordinate IPS services with the IPS staff of that agency in a typical month? How you coordinate services with the other staff of that agency?

- Have IPS staff of the (IPS community agency) assisted you in developing Individual Plans for Employment (IPE) in the past 12 months? Have you assisted them in developing employment plans for shared customers? Job search plans? Ongoing support plans?
- On average how soon does the IPS program at (IPS community agency) close an individual from IPS services after VR closes their case? What employment supports does an individual receive from (IPS community agency) after they are closed from IPS services?
- Do you think the IPS staff of (IPS community agency) understands the role and contributions of the VR program? What more should they know about VR?
- To your knowledge are other state VR counselors in your office sponsoring customers in IPS services at (IPS community agency)? How do you interact with those VR counselors about the IPS cases they have with (IPS community agency)? Are counselors from other state VR offices sponsoring persons in IPS services at (IPS community agency)? How do you interact with them about the services at (IPS community agency)?
- On average how long does it take to open a referral for IPS services from (IPS community agency)? To determine eligibility? To develop an Individual Plan for Employment?
- On average how long does it take to process a billing from (IPS community agency)? What role does your clerical support or assistant counselor play in serving persons receiving IPS services from (IPS community agency)?

Prompts: Process billing and other paperwork between the IPS community agency and the DRS office; coordinate the processing of bills and other paperwork with clerical support of other VR counselors in your office working with the IPS community agency; coordinate communication between both and with customer; set meeting schedules, represent the state VR counselor at some meetings with (IPS community agency); assist in monitoring the delivery of services from the IPS community agency; make some service decisions on behalf of the state VR counselor.

- Have you participated in IPS team meetings at (IPS community agency)? If yes do you attend those meetings on a regular basis? How often? Have you attended team meetings of the clinical staff at (IPS community agency)? How often?

- Do you communicate with the IPS staff of (IPS community agency) in other ways? What are those ways and how often is that communication? In what ways and how often do you communicate with the clinical staff of the agency? How do you resolve disagreements with the IPS staff?

- What is an appropriate referral from (IPS community agency)? What is an inappropriate referral? What is an appropriate referral from the state VR agency to (IPS community agency)?

Prompts: Individual with active symptoms; person known to be abusing substances; person with a history of violence; with many hospitalizations; with a serious criminal record.

- Have the IPS staff of (IPS community agency) assisted individuals you have referred with school related issues in the past 12 months? Did VR pay for these services?

Prompts: Assisted in identifying training programs or courses of study; assisted with enrolling in school or training; assisted with securing financial resources; with arranging for accommodations such as assistance with study skills; with transportation and housing for school.

- Have you referred persons with mental illness and other disabilities such as deaf/hard of hearing, visual limitations, mobility disabilities, intellectual disabilities, addictions issues, etc. to the (IPS community agency) for IPS services? If yes what other supports for those individuals did you arrange or provide? How did you coordinate these services with the IPS staff of the agency?

- Do you refer persons with severe mental illness who are interested in employment for pre-vocational testing or work evaluations? If yes when would you refer for those services? Do you usually wait to refer the individuals for IPS services until these evaluations are finished?
- Do you have a role in assisting persons referred to (IPS community agency) for IPS services to access benefits planning? If yes please describe that role.
- Have you coordinated or partnered with the IPS staff of the (IPS community agency) on job development and placement, career development, or other employment related activities? If yes please describe those activities in the past 12 months.

Prompts: Shared job leads, coordinated visits to employers, joint presentations to employer or other community groups, cosponsored employer events such as recognitions luncheons or after hour gatherings, planned and coordinated activities to gain access to large employers, coordinated the development of job search and ongoing support plans with and for shared IPS customers.

- What data or information do you share with the IPS team of (IPS community agency)? What data or information does the IPS team share with you or your office? How effective has the data/information sharing process been in the last 12 months?

Prompts: VR office goals and outcome expectations; changes in relevant VR regulations or policies; outcome statistics; relevant demographic information; clinical records; state VR and employment trends; information about relevant research findings or practice techniques or models.

- Does your supervisor support your role in coordinating IPS services with (IPS community agency)? How have they shown that support?

Prompts: Verbalized support; e-mail or other messages indicating support; inquire about problems and success in coordinating IPS services with (IPS

community agency); provided support and assistance when problems arose in coordinating services with (IPS community agency); shared evidence that they communicated support for your role to upper VR administrators; assisted in arranging flexible work hours or caseload requirements to support your role with the (IPS community agency) program.

- Does the upper administration of the state VR agency support your role in working with an IPS service agency? If yes how have they shown that support?

Prompts: Newsletter or other communication of support by VR agency director; revised regulations or guidelines to support IPS services; appointment of agency IPS specialists or coordinators; agency sponsored trainings specific to IPS.

- Does the IPS Model of services conflict with, enhance the achievement of, or have no effect on established state VR agency policies or practices? If yes please describe how they conflict with or enhance the achievement of the policies or practices.

Prompts: Comprehensive assessment, substantial services, IPE development, VR counselor job placement requirements, VR counselor outcome requirements such as successful case closures, serving other disability groups on your caseload.

- What additional resources do you need to make your role with the IPS team of (IPS community agency) more effective?

Prompts: Funds; training; lower/dedicated caseload; flexible work setting/schedule; office space in (IPS community agency).

- What is the role of the state mental health authority in supporting and providing IPS services? What more would you like to know about that role?

- What other local or state programs do or could contribute to supporting IPS services at (IPS community agency)?

Prompts: Employer groups; WIPA; One Stop Centers; substance abuse treatment programs; criminal justice system; Centers for Independent Living; youth services; education programs; supported housing programs; HIV/AIDS programs; immigrant service; veterans services.

- What did we miss?