



FAMILY MEMBER ADVOCATES FOR IPS SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

The International IPS Learning Community includes family members as a core stakeholder group that provides education and advocacy to their communities in the following ways:

1. Family leaders educate IPS teams and partners regarding the important roles that family can have in supporting their family member through the process of job seeking, working a job, and advancing in a career, sometimes with further education.
2. Family members help educate other families and community members about the benefits of IPS supported employment and the role of work in the recovery from mental illnesses.

Family members promote expansion of IPS services in their state and help sustain services by advocating for policy and budgetary supports for IPS programs. Family members and caregivers share their personal experiences caring for a person with mental health challenges and services, including siblings, close relatives, friends, partners, etc. And they describe how employment has promoted recovery for the person they know. Many group members are connected with the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), Vocational Rehabilitation, state mental health, consumer/family advocacy councils, or similar groups.

The IPS Employment Center facilitates monthly calls with family leaders to share updates on the Learning Community, and plan education and advocacy efforts. Family leaders are invited to attend the annual meeting of the International IPS learning community to connect with their peers and learn about advances in IPS research, implementation, and sustainment. Some of the family activities have included:

- Making presentations about IPS at conferences and meetings such as local/state National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) meetings.
- Working with IPS staff to improve the quality of IPS supported employment by participating in steering committees and fidelity reviews.
- Developing a webinar for IPS teams that describes strategies for involving family members in employment plans for individuals (posted at www.IPSworks.org).
- Developing a document for family members and job seekers that describes how IPS and Vocational Rehabilitation differ, and how the service systems can collaborate to serve people who want to work (posted at www.IPSworks.org).

Family members who are interested in more information about the monthly IPS Family group, please contact Sarah Swanson: SarahSwanson@Westat.com

[The IPS Employment Center at The Rockville Institute](#)