

INDIVIDUAL PLACEMENT & SUPPORT

**DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE EMPLOYER
ENGAGEMENT IN YOUR TEAM**

COURSE MANUAL

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IPS SUPERVISION QUESTIONS

When conducting Individual Placement and Support (IPS) supervision for clients' support into work, it's essential to gather information on each client on the caseload (especially those who may be struggling to get into work), assess progress, and provide guidance for the best possible outcomes. Here are some questions you can ask about a client's support into work during IPS supervision leading up to and focusing on what employer engagement activity is taking place:

1. How are things progressing with the client's job search?
2. Have there been any notable milestones or challenges?
3. How engaged and motivated is the client in pursuing employment?
4. Are there any barriers or concerns affecting their motivation?
5. How can we address or mitigate these challenges? – *Explore if EE could help to reduce these barriers*
6. Have the client's job preferences or employment goals evolved since our last meeting? – *Could a change mean a new EE strategy needs to be created?*
7. What are the short-term and long-term employment goals for the client?
8. What barriers or challenges is the client currently facing in their job search or employment efforts? – *Explore if lack of EE is impacting on client accessing work*
9. Is the client ok with disclosing their mental health condition to potential employers? – *If not then explore what the reasons are and how the ES is talking about disclosure with the client.*
10. Are there accommodations or workplace supports that need to be considered when thinking of what employer to approach?
11. What employer engagement activities have been undertaken on behalf of the client?
12. Are there any specific employers or job leads that should be explored further?
13. Are there any potential employers or job leads that we should follow up on?
14. How are the relationships with potential employers developing?
15. Have there been any successes or challenges in job placement?
16. Have you looked at the EE log/database to see if there are any employers on there that match your clients' preferences?
17. What was your last scheduled EE session like?
18. When do you have your next EE session booked in? – *Opportunity to join them for field mentoring*

19. How about we look online at what companies might match the client's interests and work up a list for you to contact – we can always do this together?
20. Are we maintaining accurate records of the client's progress and employer engagement-related activities?
21. How can we ensure ongoing progress toward employment goals? – *Next steps action planning*

These questions are designed to facilitate productive discussions and ensure that the client receives tailored support in their journey toward employment. It's important to maintain a client-centred approach, prioritizing their preferences and needs and remove barriers.

ERR METHOD OF DEALING WITH CONCERNS

Empathise Relate Resolve

Possible employer concerns activity:

Choose one or two examples of common employer concerns to use in the role play:

1. Productivity and Performance:
 - a. Concern: Worries about the employee's ability to perform tasks consistently and meet job expectations.
 - b. Address: Emphasize the employee's qualifications, past performance, and any accommodations or strategies in place to support their productivity.
2. Attendance and Punctuality:
 - a. Concern: Concerns about frequent absences or tardiness due to mental health-related issues.
 - b. Address: Discuss potential flexible work arrangements or accommodations that can help the employee manage their schedule effectively while meeting job requirements.
3. Stigma and Discrimination:
 - a. Concern: Fears of stigma or discrimination from co-workers, which could affect team dynamics.
 - b. Address: Promote an inclusive and non-discriminatory workplace culture. Educate employees about mental health to reduce stigma and encourage open communication.
4. Safety:
 - a. Concern: Worries about safety risks if the employee's condition affects their ability to perform tasks safely.
 - b. Address: Assess the specific job role and determine if reasonable accommodations can be made to ensure safety. Mention in work support plan and support from you and the clinical team.
5. Interpersonal Skills:
 - a. Concern: Concerns about how the employee's mental health condition might impact their interactions with colleagues or clients.
 - b. Address: Highlight the employee's strong interpersonal skills and any steps taken to improve communication and collaboration through job coaching and in work support.
6. Workplace Accommodations:
 - a. Concern: Questions about the cost or feasibility of providing necessary accommodations.
 - b. Address: Discuss potential accommodations that are reasonable, cost-effective, and compliant with disability laws. Many accommodations are low-cost or even free and can be covered by Access to Work.
7. Disclosure and Privacy:
 - a. Concern: Balancing the need for disclosure with the employee's right to privacy.

- b. Address: Respect the employee's right to disclose their condition voluntarily. Emphasize the importance of confidentiality and non-discrimination.

8. Reliability:

- a. Concern: Concerns about the employee's ability to consistently meet deadlines and fulfil job responsibilities.
- b. Address: Discuss how the employee manages their condition and any strategies in place to ensure reliability. Highlight their commitment to returning to work.

9. Training and Awareness:

- a. Concern: Lack of awareness or understanding among supervisors and colleagues regarding mental health conditions.
- b. Address: Provide training on mental health awareness and accommodation strategies to ensure that everyone is informed and supportive.

Remember by addressing these concerns early on through open communication, reasonable accommodations, and an inclusive workplace culture can help employers successfully hire and retain workers with mental health conditions, benefiting both the employee and the organization.

Top tip – how about using these for role plays in your group supervision? Great way to prepare your team members for any concerns that come up and how to deal with them using the ERR method!

BOOST FEEDBACK MODEL

Balanced

Provide a balanced view of the situation. Start by acknowledging what the individual has done well or their strengths before addressing areas for improvement. This helps to create a more receptive atmosphere

Observations

Focus on specific observations and behaviour's rather than making generalisations or judgments. Describe what you have seen or experienced objectively.

Objective

Ensure your feedback is objective and based on facts. Avoid making assumptions or offering personal opinions. Stick to observable and measurable data.

Specific

Be specific about the behaviour or actions you are addressing. Vague or general feedback can lead to confusion. Provide examples to illustrate your points.

Timely

Deliver feedback as close to the observed behaviour as possible. Timely feedback allows the individual to understand the context and make necessary adjustments promptly

SCENARIOS FOR PRACTICING BOOST FEEDBACK

- 1.** Your employment specialist has identified a potential job opportunity with a local employer. They've already conducted some preliminary research and believe that this employer could be a great fit for their clients. They call the employer and gets through to the owner. They introduce themselves and explains a bit about the IPS service, they don't really link the benefits to why the employer should meet with them and when they try to schedule an appointment to visit, the employer says they are way too busy, and can they send information which the ES agrees to before ending the call.
- 2.** You and your employment specialist are visiting a local restaurant for the first time to explore potential job opportunities for their client. You have limited information about the restaurant's hiring process. As you walk in, the ES comes across warm and friendly but doesn't explain where they are from and when they inquire about job opportunities, they are informed that all applications must be submitted online. The ES takes down the website info, thanks them for their time and leaves.
- 3.** You and your employment specialist are meeting with an IT company for the second time to discuss potential job roles for your clients. During the meeting, the ES cam across professional, learned about some of the company's open positions and the hiring process, however, they didn't explore additional roles that may be available or inquire about the specific strengths and qualities the company values in their employees.
- 4.** You accompany your employment specialist to a high street shop to follow up on an application that your client submitted. The sales staff inform you that the manager is not available at the moment and so the ES thanks them and leaves. The ES did find out the name of the manager however, they miss the opportunity to find out a suitable time to come back for a follow-up.

QUESTIONS YOU COULD ASK DURING EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

About the organisation

- What sets this company apart from its competitors in the industry?
- How does the company embrace diversity and inclusion?
- Can you share information about the company's future goals and plans for growth?
- How does the company measure and recognize employee performance and contributions?
- Can you share insights about the company's clients, customers, or target market?
- What are some of the recent achievements or exciting projects the team has been involved in?
- How does the company support work-life balance for its employees?
- What type of ongoing training or development programmes are there for employees?
- What opportunities for professional growth and advancement does the company provide?
- What is the company's culture and values like?
- What time of year is the busiest for you as a business?

About the person you're speaking to

- How long have you worked here?
- Did you start in this role?
- What is it you like most about working here?
- What are you most proud of as the manager/owner of ...?
- For a business owner – how long have you been running the business?
- For business owner – have you got any other business interests?

About general roles

- What qualities are you looking for in a team member?
- What type of person does well here?
- What is the recruitment/onboarding process like for new employees joining this team?
- Where do you normally recruit staff from?
- What are some of the challenges you may have had recruiting to these positions? (explore difficult to fill shifts/roles/turnover of staff).
- What is the preferred communication style and frequency within the team?
- I can see some of the positions you have are there others I may not be aware of?

About a specific role

- What technology tools or software are commonly used in this role?
- What are the expectations for this role in terms of independent work and teamwork?

- What would be the key performance indicators (KPIs) for this role?
- What skills and qualifications are you looking for in an ideal candidate?
- What is the team structure like? How does this role collaborate with other teams?
- What does a typical day or week look like for someone in this position?

For follow up

- We like to really get to understand as much as possible about the role/work environment – would it be possible to come back to have a tour/shadow a member of staff doing the job?
- Would it be ok to visit you again in four weeks' time, just to keep you updated and see how things are going for you?

GROUP SUPERVISION FOCUSED ON EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

Group supervision sessions focused on employer engagement can be highly beneficial for employment specialists. During these sessions, participants can share insights, challenges, and strategies for effectively engaging employers. Here is a suggested structure for an IPS group supervision session that has a focus on employer engagement:

Agenda:

1. Welcome and introduction (5 minutes):
 - a. Start the session by welcoming all participants.
 - b. Briefly introduce the purpose and goals of the group supervision session.
2. Roundtable updates (15 minutes):
 - a. Invite each participant to provide a brief update on their recent employer engagement activities.
 - b. Encourage sharing of both successes and challenges faced.
3. Case study discussion (20 minutes):
 - a. Present a hypothetical or anonymised real-life case involving employer engagement.
 - b. Encourage participants to analyse the case and discuss potential strategies or approaches for successful employer engagement.
4. Best practices sharing (15 minutes):
 - a. Ask participants to share any best practices they've discovered or implemented in their employer engagement efforts.
 - b. Discuss what has worked well in terms of building and maintaining employer relationships.
5. Challenges and problem-solving (20 minutes):
 - a. Open the floor for participants to share specific challenges or barriers they've encountered in employer engagement.
 - b. Facilitate a group discussion to think of solutions and strategies for overcoming these challenges.
6. Role-playing exercises (20 minutes):
 - a. Conduct role-playing exercises to simulate employer interactions (you could use one's from this course).
 - b. Participants can take turns playing the role of both the employment specialist and the employer, practicing communication skills such as introduction statement, questioning, dealing with concerns, follow up and action planning.
7. Guest speaker or expert (15 minutes - if applicable):
 - a. If available, invite a guest speaker or expert in employer engagement to share insights and tips.
 - b. Allow time for questions and discussion afterward.
8. Action plans (10 minutes):
 - a. Encourage each participant to set specific goals and action plans for their next employer engagement activities.
 - b. Discuss how they will implement the strategies and insights gained from the session.

9. Feedback and reflection (10 minutes):

- a. Give participants an opportunity to provide feedback on the group supervision session.
- b. Reflect on key takeaways and lessons learned.

10. Closing remarks (5 minutes):

- a. Summarise the main points discussed during the session.
- b. Express gratitude to participants for their active participation.

Throughout the group supervision session, the facilitator should ensure that the discussion remains focused on employer engagement within the context of IPS, emphasising evidence-based practices and the importance of collaborative problem-solving. Encourage an open and supportive environment where employment specialists can freely share their experiences and learn from one another to enhance their employer engagement efforts.

FIDELITY ITEM 17

Job development - frequent employer contact:

Each employment specialist makes at least 6 face-to-face employer contacts per week on behalf of clients looking for work. (Rate for each week then calculate average and use the closest scale point). An employer contact is counted even when an employment specialist meets the same employer more than one time in a week, and when the client is present or not present. Client-specific and generic contacts are included. Employment specialists use a weekly tracking form to document employer contacts.

1 point	Employment specialist makes less than 2 face-to-face employer contacts that are client-specific per week.
2 points	Employment specialist makes 2 face-to-face employer contacts per week that are client-specific OR Does not have a process for tracking.
3 points	Employment specialist makes 4 face-to-face employer contacts per week that are client-specific and uses a tracking form that is reviewed by the SE supervisor on a monthly basis.
4 points	Employment specialist makes 5 face-to-face employer contacts per week that are client-specific and uses a tracking form that is reviewed by the SE supervisor on a weekly basis.
5 points	Employment specialist makes 6 or more face-to-face employer contacts per week that are client specific, or 2 employer contacts times the number of people looking for work when there are less than 3 people looking for work on their caseload (e.g. new programme). In addition, employment specialist keeps records that can be reviewed by a supervisor on a weekly basis

FIDELITY ITEM 18

Job development - quality of employer contact:

Employment specialists build relationships with employers through multiple visits in person that are planned to learn the needs of the employer, convey what the supported employment programme offers to the employer, describe client strengths that are a good match for the employer (rate for each employment specialist, then calculate average and use the closest scale point).

1 point	Employment specialist meets employer when helping client to turn in job applications, OR Employment specialist rarely makes employer contacts.
2 points	Employment specialists contacts employer to ask about job openings and then shares these "leads" with clients.
3 points	Employment specialist follows up on advertised job openings by introducing self, describing programme, and asking employer to interview client.
4 points	Employment specialist meets with employers in person whether or not there is a job opening, advocates for clients by describing strengths and asks employers to interview clients.
5 points	Employment specialist builds relationships with employers through multiple visits in person that are planned to learn the needs of the employer, convey what the supported employment programme offers to the employer, describe client strengths that are a good match for the employer.

NOTES

Make notes here



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This training programme is funded by NHS England and has been developed by Centre for Mental Health, Social Finance and IPS Grow

www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk