

Employment = health intervention

Global recognition for New Zealand supported employment agency

A research paper recently published in the International Journal of Therapy and Rehabilitation (UK) examines employment outcomes achieved by Workwise Hawke's Bay and compares them to international data...highlighting some outstanding results!

Workwise – a leading New Zealand support employment agency

Workwise Employment Agency supports people with experience of mental illness to find, get and keep jobs – that's jobs they really want with employers who see and value their skills and potential.

Using a model known as Individual Placement and Support (IPS), Workwise works alongside people as they search to find employment and enjoy all the benefits that come from working; financial and personal independence, social inclusion, fun, a sense of achievement and purpose.

Individual Placement and Support (IPS) - an evidence-based model that works!

The model, designed specifically for people with serious mental illness, is characterised by seven core principles.

1. Competitive employment is the primary goal.
2. Everyone who wants employment support is eligible.
3. Job search is in line with individual preferences.
4. Job search is immediate, beginning within one month.
5. Employment specialists and clinical teams are integrated and work together.
6. Support is time-unlimited and individualised to suit the employer and the employee.
7. Welfare benefit counselling supports the person through the transition from a benefit to work.

Employment outcomes – Workwise is an expert in the delivery of IPS

In comparing Workwise Hawke's Bay's performance against international best practice, the research confirms Workwise as an expert in the delivery of IPS.

The highlights of Workwise Hawke's Bay's performance against international benchmarks include the following.

- More clients getting jobs – 64.2% compared to 61% internationally.
- Clients keeping jobs longer – 51.7 weeks compared to 22 weeks internationally.
- More clients working for 26 weeks or more – 42.3% compared to 34% in Australia.
- Clients working more hours – 26.6 hours per week compared to 20 hours internationally.

While the integration of employment and mental health services is a key principle of IPS, there is currently no such formal arrangement in Hawke's Bay. Despite this, the research shows segregated services can still be highly effective.

Workwise chief executive Warren Elwin says it's important that supported employment practice is at least in line with the latest, best research into what works. "To do any less can be seen as unethical, and beyond that we must continue to seek fresh possibilities to assist people to find and live their dreams."

Workwise believes the research could help supported employment and mental health services work together to design and develop high performing, evidence-based employment services for people with experience of mental illness. "This research signals opportunities for ongoing development and demonstrates how other employment services could employ the methods used by Workwise."

www.workwise.org.nz

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