



MYTHS AND FACTS

ALABAMA'S INDIVIDUAL PLACEMENT AND SUPPORT – SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (AL-IPS-SEP)

Myth 1

MYTH: PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS CAN'T KEEP A JOB.

FACT: PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS CAN WORK AND DO WORK!

Individuals receiving mental health and IPS-Supported Employment services were determined more successful at finding and retaining employment than consumers not receiving mental health services and IPS. IPS programs help people with mental illness to quickly choose, secure, and maintain competitive employment. The IPS Employment Specialists consider the talents and interests of job seekers when locating a job match.

Benefits of employment on mental health and well-being are increased self-esteem, better control of psychiatric symptoms, increased life satisfaction, and reduced psychiatric hospitalizations. For anyone, but especially individuals dealing with a serious mental illness, employment offers daily structure and routine, a sense of self, meaningful goals, and opportunities for friendships and social support.¹

Myth 2

MYTH: PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS ARE NOT INTERESTED IN WORKING.

FACT: PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS HAVE THE SAME LIFE GOALS AS EVERYONE ELSE, TO INCLUDE WORKING!

In Alabama, service recipients with lived experience of mental illness collectively voiced having a meaningful, stable job is essential to mental health recovery². The Alabama Department of Mental Health recognizes employment as a social determinant of health. Research demonstrates unemployment in the general population correlates with illness, substance abuse, domestic violence, lack of social connection, and other adverse outcomes.

The Alabama Department of Mental Health is working diligently with national experts to transform mental health culture and practice to promote work as a viable recovery goal.



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Myth 3

MYTH: PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS ARE VIOLENT AND UNPREDICTABLE.

FACT: PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS ARE NOT ANY MORE LIKELY TO BEHAVE VIOLENTLY THAN THE GENERAL PUBLIC.

People with mental illness are no more likely to act out violently than anyone else. In fact, people with severe mental illnesses are over 10 times more likely to be victims of violent crime than the general population.

You probably know someone with a mental health diagnosis and may not realize it. Many people with a mental illness are highly active and productive members of our communities.

Myth 4

MYTH: PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE OF A MENTAL ILLNESS ARE NOT VALUED IN THE WORKPLACE.

FACT: PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCES OFFER A DIFFERENT, POSITIVE, AND VALUABLE PERSPECTIVE.

The lived experience of mental illness can be invaluable in the workplace, particularly in the field of mental health. Knowledge of the day-to-day struggles offers a perspective different from that of clinicians and has proven to be highly beneficial as evidenced by the work of Certified Peer Specialists (CPS). Alabama's IPS-Supported Employment team not only includes Employment Specialists and Benefits Specialists but also includes Certified Peer Specialists.

1 2020. Westat. Twenty-eight Randomized Trials. <https://ipsworks.org/index.php/evidence-for-ips/>.

2 Alabama Department of Mental Health. Alabama Direction Council. 2007. White Paper.