

# EMPLOYMENT DISCOVERY TIP SHEET

*Page 1 is intended for service recipients as they explore employment opportunities. Pages 2 and 3 are for staff members with Community Support Teams (CST), Transition Management Services (TMS) and In-Reach, and other community mental health team members as you support individuals in considering and exploring work.*

## INSTITUTE FOR BEST PRACTICES

“To have a job for this long... It’s one of the best feelings in the world.”

Dontay, IPS Participant

### A FEW FACTS

- Just because you start a job, social security will NOT decide that you are no longer disabled.
- Most people are able to work and still receive part or all of their usual income from social security.
- You will NOT automatically lose your Medicaid or Medicare once you return to work.
- With the help of a benefits counselor, you can figure out what hours and what pay rate you would like to work in order to continue to receive the social security benefits that meet your needs.



Kaya Iv

### OPENING DOORS

Employment can open many doors. A job can set you on the right track toward accomplishing many of your goals. Finding a job can seem overwhelming, even frightening to some. But an entire team of people is ready and willing to support you. Talk to your provider about connecting with Individual Placement and Support (IPS) supported employment.

“Working has helped me feel like a full person again.”

Anonymous, IPS Participant

### OVERCOMING ANXIETIES

But... Are you worried that getting a job will cause you to lose SSI or SSDI income? We understand. IPS has benefits counselors who can meet with you one-on-one to discuss your fears and help you figure out the path that is right for you. Within certain limits, almost everyone can work AND still receive social security benefits.

More resources to learn about working and maintaining Social Security benefits:

- [choosework.ssa.gov/library/debunking-the-three-biggest-myths-about-disability-benefits-and-work](https://choosework.ssa.gov/library/debunking-the-three-biggest-myths-about-disability-benefits-and-work)
- [ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10069.pdf](https://ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10069.pdf)

## ENGAGING PEOPLE IN CONVERSATION

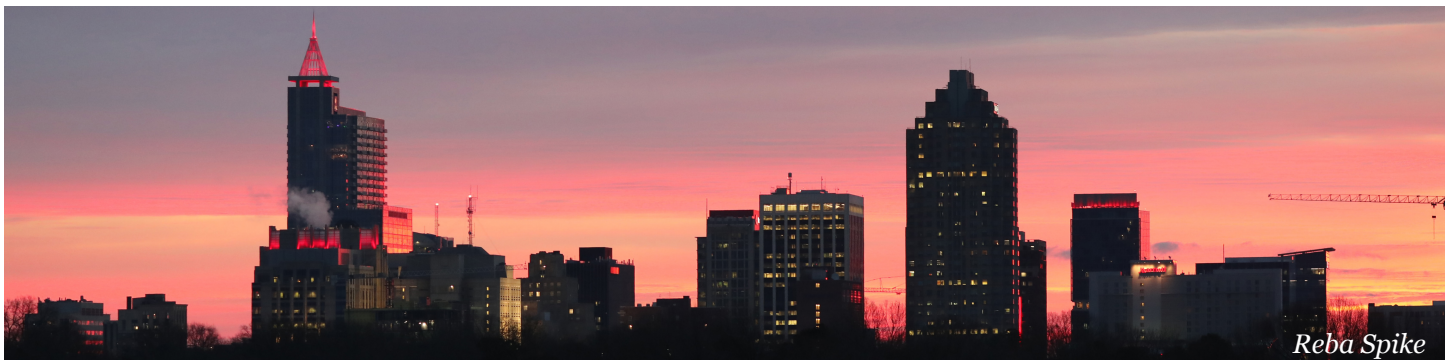


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When something that is challenging or anxiety-provoking is first proposed to you, how often do you immediately say, “Yes! I’ll do it”? Probably not very often. It is not surprising that people who have been out of work for many years, or who have had negative past experiences on a job, don’t typically jump at the first offer to help connect them to employment. Engagement in a meaningful conversation about returning to work or school is a process that takes time, intention, and thoughtfulness. You cannot ask the question one time and then assume the answer will always be “no” or “not right now.”

### THOUGHTFUL QUESTIONS FOR BUILDING INTEREST & MOTIVATION

- Tell me what a typical day looks like for you.
  - On a scale of 1 to 10, how satisfied are you with your typical day?
- When you get bored, what are things that you like to do?
- If you had more money, what would you do with it?
- What would you like your life to look like in 5 years?
  - Where would you be living?
  - What relationships would you have?
  - How would you spend your time?
- When you were 5 years old, what type of job did you want to have when you became an adult? Why?
- What might be some of the benefits of working and/or school?
- What are some of your fears about working and/or school?
- If you were to find a job now, what type of job would you like? What appeals to you about that job?



*Reba Spike*

## SUCCESS STORIES



[Dontay](#)



[Brenden](#)



[Autumn](#)



[DeVon](#)

## WHAT'S NEXT?



*Tim Gouw*

## IPS CHECKLIST

- 1) Check [here](#) to locate an IPS team that serves people in your county.
- 2) Outreach the IPS Team Lead listed at the site above, or speak with your supervisor about connecting with IPS teams who are contracted with your LME-MCO.
- 3) After sending in the referral form and documentation, call the IPS Team Lead *together* with the individual. Help ask any questions and alleviate concerns that the individual has about working.
- 4) Attend initial intake sessions *together* with the individual you are referring.
- 5) Help the IPS team get to know the individual you are working with and assist with assertive engagement.
- 6) Help the IPS team think about possible job matches and job supports.
- 7) Consider scheduling regular meetings with your local IPS teams – build a partnership and foster relationships.
- 8) The goal is to make a successful connection – sending a referral is only the beginning.

Do you have more questions?

Please contact [ariel\\_reynolds@med.unc.edu](mailto:ariel_reynolds@med.unc.edu) at the UNC Institute for Best Practices for more information and coaching assistance.