

Exploring the Possibility of Employment

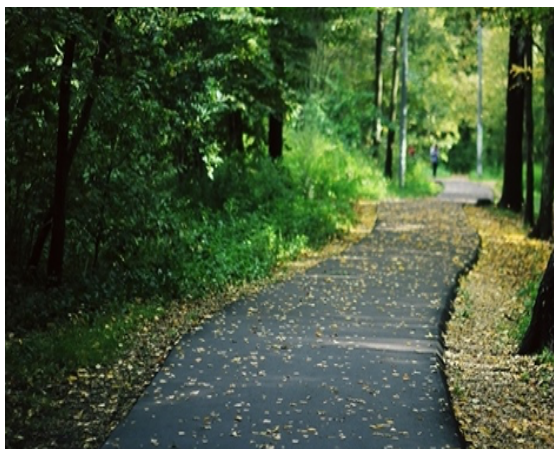
INSTITUTE FOR BEST PRACTICES

“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
- ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10069.pdf

SUCCESS STORIES



Dontay



Brenden



Autumn



DeVon

SUCCESS IN EMPLOYMENT

Dontay: Before connecting to IPS and employment, Dontay said that he was headed down a dangerous path. Working with the Employment Specialist and Employment Peer Mentor, Dontay built up his confidence and learned how to interview effectively and apply for the types of jobs that he was truly interested in. After working at his restaurant job for well over a year, Dontay stated that having a job for this long is “the best feeling in the world.” He feels like IPS has helped him find the footing in life that he had once lost.

Brenden: Brenden’s teens and early twenties were not easy. He cycled in and out of the hospital for many years before connecting to the Transition to Community Living program through Transition Management Services (TMS) and then Community Support Teams (CST). With the help of therapy, peer support, and effective medication, Brenden began to experience the hope that life can offer. With support from IPS (in partnership with CST), Brenden began looking for work. Though it took several months, he eventually landed a job where he feels like his co-workers are family. As he states, he has been “hospital free for over three years,” and he is actively pursuing long-term career options and looking forward to expanding his community and family.

Autumn: Autumn knew, deep down, that there was more to life than sitting at home all day. She connected with an outpatient therapist and psychiatrist who helped her find the right combination of medications and emotional support. Her therapist referred her to IPS, and Autumn began exploring her interests and long-term goals. Autumn is a team lead in a bakery and plans to return to school. She says that her mood has improved, she has more money to do the things socially that she always wanted to do, and has the confidence to pursue the life that she now knows is possible – a life of meaning and hope.

DeVon: DeVon’s recovery journey has been long, but he has persevered. Through therapy, medication management, and employment services with IPS, he now has a part-time job with city government and is connected to a class where he is able to pursue his biggest passion in life: writing. DeVon reports that the IPS team has given him the resources and the motivation to help him maintain his job and delve into the world of creative writing.

Do you have more questions?

Please contact ariel_reynolds@med.unc.edu at the UNC Institute for Best Practices for more information and coaching assistance.