INDIVIDUAL PLACEMENT AND SUPPORT (IPS)

COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

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INDIVIDUAL PLACEMENT AND SUPPORT (IPS) COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

Competencies are defined as a measurable capability that is required for effective performance, comprised of knowledge, skills, abilities, and other personal characteristics.

HOW MIGHT THE COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK BE USED?

The Competency Framework will underpin the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Workforce Development Framework by providing consistent guidance on the skills and competencies required to be an effective IPS specialist. This will support improved quality and consistency of the workforce across workforce development activities, including recruitment, performance development, training and recognition.

For example, the competencies in the Competency Framework could be used to:

- Develop consistent position descriptions and job advertisements;
- Support IPS specialists to identify their strengths and areas for development, including IPS career pathways;
- Support the perceived professionalisation of the IPS workforce by providing a clear, common and public framework for IPS roles;
- Support IPS managers in performance management conversations with their employees;
- Provide a structure and curriculum for IPS micro-credentials; and
- Provide an assessment framework for IPS awards and other recognition.

DEVELOPING THE COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

The Competency Framework has been informed by initial consultations with IPS specialists in headspace centres in late 2021, and a literature review of evidence on IPS competencies. The draft was tested by headspace IPS specialists and their managers in March 2022. This document incorporates their feedback.

There was strong support for the idea of a competency framework, with IPS specialists able to clearly point to a range of benefits from arranging the IPS specialist competencies into one document. IPS specialists reported that the length and depth of the current document is appropriate for this range of purposes, and it will be helpful for underpinning other workforce development activities.

Orygen also undertook a survey of young people experiencing mental ill-health to understand their experiences of seeking support to find work and study, to incorporate their perspectives on competencies for IPS specialists to hold.

The Competency Framework will form the basis for other workforce development activities to be outlined in the IPS Workforce Development Framework in 2022.

The framework identifies the core competencies we would expect an effective IPS specialist working in youth mental health services to hold. A final competency *(Advanced IPS)* reflects a desire among some IPS specialists to undertake optional additional training and development activities to access other career opportunities in IPS.

VALUES TO BE AN IPS SPECIALIST

In addition to the core competencies detailed below, there are several values that IPS specialists working in youth mental health settings must bring to the role:

- **Empathy** – the ability to understand and empathise with young people, their families and supporters;
- **Flexibility** – the ability to work flexibly in response to young people's changing and emerging needs;
- **Learning-focused** – the ability to build learning and continuous improvement into your work; and
- **Confidence** – the ability to engage confidently with young people, other staff, employers, education providers and community members.

DOMAIN	COMPETENCY	CORE SKILLS
Working with young people experiencing mental ill-health	Working with young people experiencing mental ill-health	• Understanding young people, and their mental health risk and protective factors • Engaging with young people experiencing mental ill-health • Engaging with the families, carers and supporters of young people experiencing mental ill-health • Recognising and supporting clients' strengths and capabilities • Understanding and implementing shared decision-making with young people • Providing guidance around sharing of mental ill-health, and dealing with stigma and self-stigma • Supporting young people to exit the program • Supporting trauma-exposed young people seeking employment and/or education support
	Working with diverse young people experiencing mental ill-health	• Understanding needs of diverse young people experiencing mental ill-health including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, culturally diverse young people, LGBTIQA+ young people, young people with disabilities, and neurodiverse young people • Creating a culturally safe and inclusive work environment

DOMAIN	COMPETENCY	CORE SKILLS
Working in a clinical mental health setting	Understanding youth mental health	• Understanding cognitive, physical and social issues relating to mental ill-health • Understanding the work and study issues for young people experiencing mental ill-health • Being aware of coping strategies relating to the range of mental health conditions • Supporting young people to manage difficult emotions • Understanding suicide prevention in youth mental health services • Understanding self-harm among young people • Understanding alcohol and other drug use among young people
	Working in an IPS role	• Promoting a cooperative and productive work environment • Collaborating with other IPS specialists to brainstorm solutions, share networks and knowledge • Promoting IPS to clinicians and other mental health service staff • Effective management of vocational records and relevant client information • Understanding the role of other vocational supports in mental health services, including psychosocial programs, groups, vocational peer work and other co-located support services • [See Professional and ethical conduct] • [See 'Advanced IPS' for IPS Supervisor competencies]
	Working in a clinical environment	• Understanding meetings, terminology, boundaries and record management in clinical mental health settings • Understanding the role of IPS in a mental health service • Collaborating with other mental health service staff to work towards the young person's goals and ensure continuity of support • Contributing to shared care and decision-making with other mental health service staff to work towards the young person's goals and ensure continuity of support • Understanding the role of and collaborating with the lived experience (peer) workforce • Sharing the value of IPS with clinicians and strengthening referral networks
	Implementing trauma-informed practice	• Understanding and implementing trauma-informed care in youth mental health services

DOMAIN	COMPETENCY	CORE SKILLS
Working with employers and education providers	Understanding the local labour and education market	• Understanding the structure of the labour/education markets and evaluating labour/education trends • Understanding alternative education pathways • Understanding employer and education provider motivations • Understanding relevant legislation and regulation, including workers' rights, conditions, employment and recruitment practices
	Engaging and supporting employers and education providers	• Developing relationships with employers and education providers to understand their needs • Building a network of appropriate and safe employers and education providers • Visiting potential work and education environments, including with young people • Integrating employer and education provider needs with young people's preferences and capabilities • Overcoming employer and education provider objections and stigma • Identifying and supporting reasonable adjustments

DOMAIN	COMPETENCY	CORE SKILLS
Career planning and support	Facilitating career exploration and goal-setting activities	• Undertaking motivational interviewing • Assessing young people's strengths, interests, work values and career goals • Developing career plans • Identifying and recommending education and training options (including traineeships and apprenticeships) aligned to young people's career goals, capabilities and learning style • Supporting young people to make well informed choices about training, education and employment pathways (e.g. training costs, job prospects, salary expectations) • Re-evaluating young people's career goals, motivation and engagement with education and employment
	Supporting young people experiencing mental ill-health to gain employment and education opportunities	• Developing career marketing tools (e.g. resumes and cover letters) • Identifying emerging industries and recruitment trends and supporting young people to engage in appropriate opportunities • Using digital recruitment tools (e.g. LinkedIn, online application processes) and education application processes, including special consideration • Practising interview skills, including group interview skills
	Undertaking individualised job and education searches	• Considering the young person's needs in the employment/education context (supervision, work or study environment, stressors, wages, colleagues, accessibility) • Promoting jobseekers to employers and securing competitive employment placements by focusing on strengths, interests, career goals and capabilities • Assisting young people to advocate for supports with employers and education providers
	Supporting education and employment retention	• Developing natural support systems (e.g. friends, family, co-workers) • Identifying external services or programs to support employment/education retention (e.g. transport, work clothing, scholarship/financial aid) • Understanding how employment and education impact young people's social welfare entitlements and undertaking benefits counselling • Providing education on (and adapting to) appropriate workplace or education conduct (face-to-face settings and online) • Supporting young people experiencing mental ill-health to overcome setbacks and disappointments

DOMAIN	COMPETENCY	CORE SKILLS
Delivering IPS	Understanding and marketing IPS	• Understanding the IPS evidence base and value, including 'success stories' and data about your own local program • Public speaking and presenting skills • Sharing the value of IPS with employers and education providers • Sharing the value of IPS with community organisations and health providers • Developing partnerships with employers, education providers and community organisations
	Supporting IPS fidelity reviews	• Understanding the IPS model, and the role and scope of fidelity reviews, including what is required to meet fidelity • Undertaking site self-assessment and reflection • Communicating with fidelity reviewers • Documenting practice for fidelity reviews and meeting reporting expectations
	Professional and ethical conduct	• Understanding and acting within professional scope of practice • Using recovery-oriented language • Maintaining a flexible approach and effective time management
IPS career pathways	Understanding an IPS career	• Identifying career pathways within IPS • Understanding your IPS career goals and identifying areas for improvement • Understanding IPS worker support programs e.g. communities of practice, mentoring, professional support, continuing professional development

	Advanced IPS	• **Professional support:** reflective IPS professional guidance and support
		  - Providing a positive space for debriefing and listening with empathy
		  - Building confidence and capacity to identify and manage role challenges
		  - Supporting IPS specialists to develop their career pathway
		• **Fidelity review:** undertaking fidelity reviews
		  - Understanding the IPS model, the role and scope of fidelity reviews
		  - Conducting fidelity review interviews with IPS programs and service users
		  - Reviewing and rating services against the IPS Fidelity Scale
		  - Writing fidelity review reports and providing factual feedback and recommendations for improvement
		• **Research:** researching and strengthening the IPS evidence base
		  - Understanding the IPS evidence base
		  - Contributing to research on IPS effectiveness and implementation
		  - Undertaking data collection, analysis and interpretation
		• **Advocacy:** Advocating for IPS
		  - Understanding the IPS evidence base
		  - Contributing to policy and advocacy for the IPS program
		  - Developing report and grant-writing skills

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Orygen acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands
we are on and pays respect to their Elders past and present.
Orygen recognises and respects their cultural heritage,
beliefs and relationships to Country, which continue to be
important to the First Nations people living today.

REVOLUTION
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