Title:

Applicability of IPS Principles to Job Inclusion of Vulnerable Youth

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Abstract:

BACKGROUND: Researchers and others are worried about the marginalization of vulnerable youth who drop out of school and have difficulties finding and keeping a job. Supported Employment (SE) approaches have shown good employment results for persons with disabilities. Individual Placement and Support (IPS) for persons with severe mental challenges has shown particularly good effects. Can support based on the principles of IPS also contribute to increased job inclusion of vulnerable youth?

OBJECTIVE: Research has suggested that the IPS principles are applicable to support for young adults with mental challenges, but little is known about their applicability to support for non-psychiatric populations. This article aims to expand knowledge in this field by discussing the applicability of the IPS principles to support for vulnerable youth aged 15–25 who do not necessarily have severe mental challenges.

METHODS: The article is based on theme-oriented, cross-case analysis of qualitative data gathered from 16 youth pilots.

RESULTS: Modifications of six of the eight IPS principles are suggested if applied to vulnerable youth in order to better meet their needs and situation.

CONCLUSIONS: The IPS principles can be applied to vulnerable youth, but the analysis indicates that the suggested modifications will increase their applicability.

Body of text:

1. Introduction

Unemployment among youth is high in several countries, and researchers as well as policymakers are worried about increasing marginalization of vulnerable youth (Camilleri-Cassar, 2013; Hammer & Hyggen, 2013; Lamb, Markussen, Teese, Polesel, & Sandberg, 2011; MacIntyre, 2014; Mascherini, Massimiliano, Salvatore, Meierkord, & Jungblot, 2012; Noble-Carr, Barker, McArthur, & Woodman, 2015; Nochajski & Schweitzer, 2014). Supported Employment (SE) might be a model for job inclusion with the potential to solve some of the challenges relating to vulnerable youth. Several studies have documented good results of job inclusion approaches that build on SE for adults (Bond, Drake, & Becker, 2008; Burns et al., 2007; Cimera, 2011; Spjelkavik, 2012). Several different versions of SE have been developed, some of them targeting specific user groups, for instance people with mental problems, learning disabilities, or other kinds of disabilities. Central versions include the five-step process of EUSE (EUSE 2014), Individual Placement and Support (IPS) (Drake et al., (2012), Customized Employment (CE) (Griffin, Hammis, & Geary, 2007), and youth transition studies that have also incorporated SE approaches (Luecking, 2009; Wehman, 2011).

Research on Individual Placement and Support (IPS), in particular, has produced documentation showing outstanding effects (Drake, Bond, & Becker, 2012; Luciano et al., 2014). For example, Bond et al. (2008) found that the employment rate was 61% for IPS,

compared to 23% for controls based on an analysis of 11 RCTs. IPS comprises eight principles: 1) Competitive Employment, 2) Eligibility based on Client Choice, 3) Integration of Rehabilitation and Mental Health Service, 4) Attention to Client Preferences, 5) Personalized Benefits Counseling, 6) Rapid Job Search, 7) Systematic Job Development, and 8) Time-unlimited Individualized Supports (Drake et al., 2012). These principles have been operationalized in a 25-item IPS fidelity scale and a "positive association between IPS fidelity and employment outcome has been replicated by several research groups" (Drake et.al, 2012, p. 40). IPS is therefore referred to as the evidence-based approach to Supported Employment. If IPS is applicable to support for vulnerable youth, the implementation of IPS could have a great potential to reduce marginalization and increase the inclusion of vulnerable youth.

However, IPS was not especially designed to support young people. The evidence of the effect of IPS on young people is still limited, but promising. It is limited because few studies have been carried out so far, and promising because the studies that address youth and IPS show good results (Bond, Drake, & Campbell, 2014; Burke-Miller, Razzano, Grey, Blyler, & Cook, 2012; Ferguson, 2013). For instance, Bond et al. (2014) found in a relatively small sample of young adults that 82% of IPS participants found employment during follow-up, compared with 42% of control patients. They concluded that the IPS model is effective in assisting young adults with severe mental illnesses enrolled in community mental health programs to attain competitive work.

Bond et al. (2014) claim that "most, if not all, of the IPS principles are appropriate for young adults" (p. 6), meaning young adults with severe mental illness. However, they suggest that researchers should continue to evaluate adaptations with a view to possible improvements when applied to young adults. Drake et al. (2012) also address further research on the applicability of IPS to other populations and conclude that "the research on IPS in non-psychiatric populations is sparse, and that assumptions about its applicability to these other

populations are speculative" (p.84). They suggest that, when transferred to new populations, IPS will need to "be modified substantially to accommodate the psychosocial and medical aspects of the new population" (Ibid., p.84).

Implementing IPS in support of vulnerable youth will mean providing it to a target group consisting of a) young persons alone, b) most of whom do not have severe mental challenges (even though a large proportion of them have minor mental challenges). So far, no studies seem to have systematically assessed the applicability of the IPS principles to this target group. This article aims to do so. The questions I ask are:

1. Can the principles of IPS meet the needs of vulnerable youth?

2. What adjustments or additions are required to the IPS principles in order to meet the needs and the situation of vulnerable youth?

2. Methodology

Data were drawn from three research projects: A) An evaluation of 15 youth pilots aimed at developing methods for the inclusion of vulnerable youth aged 15-25 in school or work (data from 13 of these pilots were included) (Frøyland & Fossestøl, 2014). B) Pilots in two Employment and Welfare offices to implement a "place-then-train" approach to job inclusion of unemployed persons with support needs (aged 18+) (Frøyland & Spjelkavik, 2014). C) Implementation of Supported Employment and Supported Education services in a senior high school. Supported employment services were implemented in an initial phase lasting from 2009 to 2012 (Bragdø & Spjelkavik, 2013). In a second phase, a combination of Supported Employment and Supported Education is under implementation (Bernstrøm, Frøyland, & Spjelkavik, 2015). The research reports referred to from these three projects contain descriptions and analyses of each pilot and its context.

The data selected for this article covered 16 pilots. The data contain information about the needs and challenges of vulnerable youth, their situation, and the local context, methods

for the follow-up, coordination of services, and experience from job inclusion. Central informants were vulnerable youth, employers, and support givers such as youth workers, job specialists and representatives of collaborating services, such as the employment and welfare service, schools, health services, outreach services, child welfare services and other services. Table 1 shows more details about the data included.

Table 1: Data overview

Data were gathered in accordance with multiple case study designs (Yin, 2014). The data mainly consist of transcribed, semi-structured qualitative interviews. For project A and C, the data also contain focus group interviews with collaborating services, and aggregated quantitative data about approximately 1000 vulnerable youth (gender, age, problem type, measures, support, situation before and after participation). For project A, service records from each pilot, as well as field notes from case visits, were included in the data. For pilots in projects B and C, summaries of workshops with pilot teams were included, as well as local pilot documentation.

2.1 Analysis

I developed matrices to display relevant data from each pilot relating to each IPS principle. I also defined themes that were relevant to the assessment of each IPS principle and to data selection. The themes are listed in Table 2. Data were then searched for in each pilot. Selected data were coded using a concept-driven approach (Gibbs, 2007). Finding the relevant information was not very difficult, since the data had been organized by topics in semi-structured interview guides. In addition, I read the rest of the data twice, which led to the discovery of relevant information "hiding" under other headings.

I analyzed the coded data from each pilot by writing short summaries on each theme for every pilot. The summaries also contained direct quotes, researcher explanations and divergent information and areas where there was little or no information. The process of

reading and writing summaries was repeated three times, and it led to several changes and the rephrasing of themes and summaries.

This process showed that there were many similarities across pilots. The process of comparing the information across pilots was thus a parallel process. However, I have not performed a case-oriented, cross-case analysis (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). My aim was not to perform an explicit pilot-to-pilot comparison, but to find patterns of needs, situations and experience related to job inclusion across the pilots (cases). It is more correct to say that the analysis resembles a variable-oriented, cross-case analysis, focusing more on themes than variables, however, and therefore also resembling theme-oriented analysis (Thagaard, 1999). In variable-oriented approaches, "generality is given precedence over complexity' (Ragin, 1987, p.54), and the details of any specific case 'reside behind the broad patterns found across a wide variety of cases, and little explicit case-to-case comparison is done" (Miles et al., 2014, p.102). My approach can perhaps be labeled "theme-oriented, cross-case analysis". I wrote summaries of findings across pilots. They are shown in Table 2.

Theme-centered analysis has been criticized for separating the data from its original context (Thagaard, 1999), and variable-oriented, cross-case analysis for being poor at handling the real complexities and sometimes producing very general or even "vacuous" findings (Miles et al., 2014, p.102). Several authors suggest combinations of variable-oriented and case-oriented, cross-case analysis (Miles et al., 2014; Ragin, 1987; Thagaard, 1999). Descriptions and analyses of each pilot already existed prior to my writing this article. This made it possible to combine my theme-oriented, cross-case analysis with knowledge about the context and complexities of each pilot.

None of the pilots had implemented IPS, which is not surprising since none of them worked solely with what is usually the target group for IPS: persons with severe mental illness enrolled in treatment. My aim was to assess the applicability of IPS principles to a somewhat

different target group than is normally included in IPS programs. However, three of the pilots had implemented the five-stage process of SE, which has much in common with IPS (EUSE, 2014). In addition, the pilots had much in common with the IPS approach, for instance in aiming for employment, performing job development, paying attention to user preferences, and providing individualized long-term follow-up. I argue that qualitative knowledge about vulnerable youth, their needs and situation can provide relevant information for an assessment like the one I have carried out. The data are not suitable for statistical generalization, however. The article aims to produce analytic generalizations based on an assessment of qualitative data.

2.2 Findings

Table 2 shows summaries of major findings. Since there were more similarities than differences across pilots and informant groups, I present the summarized findings in one column, and then address observed differences between pilots or informant groups in the other columns. The first column refers to the IPS principle of relevance.

Table 2: Themes for data selection and summarized findings

Interviews with youth, employers, and support givers show that vulnerable youth may need support and counseling on a broad spectrum of issues. Challenges differ, ranging widely from minor difficulties related to how to fill in applications for school courses for the coming year to major problems such as severe mental challenges, drug problems or criminal activity. Frøyland and Fossestøl reported from project A and found that around 40% of this population of vulnerable youth had mental challenges, while around 20% had health problems and around 15% had alcohol or drug problems (2014). Close to 20% had been followed up by the child welfare services, and approximately 10% had been involved with the police (Ibid.). Common problems described were limited networks, lack of an apartment, financial problems, and challenging relationships with their families, and – for immigrants – reduced

language skills. Pilot workers also reported social anxiety, withdrawal from social activities, loneliness, and internet gaming/dependence among youth. It was relatively common among these young people to fall into a pattern of staying awake at night and sleeping during the day.

Interviews with support givers and aggregated data show that some vulnerable youth were still students in school, while others had dropped out, and yet others had completed school with poor results. While some of these youth expressed a motivation to work and were eager to start doing something other than school, others seemed to have no interest, "drive", or hope. While some of these young people came from resourceful families, a large proportion of them had parents and siblings with similar challenges as themselves.

Support givers from most pilots had also experienced that some vulnerable youth tend to withdraw from assistance, leading to a risk of marginalization (they are often referred to as NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training)). Withdrawal from support can, but does not always mean a wish not to receive support. Focus group interviews describing youth progress contain several examples of successful motivation of withdrawn youth after contact with outreach services or home visits. Thus, interpreting withdrawal as the client's choice can lead to the non-inclusion of youth with huge support needs.

The descriptions of the needs and situation of vulnerable youth from these Norwegian pilots echoes findings from a large body of research literature from other European countries and the U.S. (Johansson & Höjer, 2012; Mascherini et al., 2012; Munford & Sanders, 2014; Noble-Carr et al., 2015; Osgood, Foster, & Courtney, 2010; Sanders & Munford, 2014; Van Parys & Struyven, 2012; Xie, Sen, & Foster, 2014). I believe that the findings can thereby also be relevant to vulnerable youth in other countries than Norway.

3. Discussion

The analysis provided support for the applicability of IPS principles to support for the target group of vulnerable youth, but modifications of six of the principles are suggested. The

analysis suggested important modifications of principles 1, 3, and 8. The further discussion will therefore mainly focus on these principles. The analysis also indicated a need for minor modifications of principles 2, 4, and 6. These principles will also be briefly commented on. Principles 5 and 7 were supported without modifications, and they are therefore not included in the further discussion. The discussion and conclusions are summed up in Table 3.

3.1 IPS principle 1: Competitive Employment

"Agencies providing IPS services are committed to competitive employment as an attainable goal for clients with serious mental illness seeking employment," write Drake et al. (2012, p.33). This means that IPS employment specialists help clients to enter competitive jobs directly, and that they do not assist clients to obtain non-competitive jobs such as "volunteer jobs, unpaid internships, sheltered work, and set-aside jobs" (Ibid, p.33). For further elaboration, I define competitive employment as jobs at ordinary wages in the open labor market.

Interviews with youth and support givers indicate that most vulnerable youth want ordinary jobs, some in the short term, and many in the longer term. For example, all youths who took part in a group session in one of the pilots had work as part of their dream for the future. Because vulnerable youth often have a history of lack of success, many of them have lost motivation and "drive". They often have little work experience and knowledge, and have low self-esteem. Examples from several pilots underline the importance of facilitating mastery and participation among these youth, and interviews with employers show that the workplace is an arena that can contribute to this, given a good job match, sufficient support, and an inclusive work environment.

> *I have experienced youngsters who I thought were in need of help, but we have managed to help them*
> *so that they have gotten back on track. Some adolescents have parents, teachers, and other helpers*
> *that go around and worry a lot about them. However, when they enter the regular labor market and*

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meet ordinary working people who speak directly and give specific feedback as they always have done, then they learn and master, and they find out that someone needs their efforts. (Youth advisor)

Support through clear messages, positive feedback and caring support from colleges are often mentioned as important elements by support givers. Interviews with support givers and youth show that work experience in the form of job exploration, job tasters, internships, apprenticeships, summer jobs, or work practice can be good short-term ways of facilitating mastery, motivation, learning, and inclusion.

Work experience seems to be an important cue, giving youth the experience that someone needs them, that they can contribute, and that it is achievable. It also represents an opportunity for them to learn about their own skills, potential, and interests.

Interviews with youth and support givers indicate that sheltered work can also facilitate mastery and socialization, and that it can function well for some vulnerable youth for a period. A young boy in one of the pilots first got a job at a local factory assisted by the local job specialist, but he did not master it. For some time after that, he attended a local sheltered workshop and took part in the activities going on there. His support givers followed him up closely all the time. According to them, he seemed to need close follow-up, secure relations and time to "mature". They described him as a happy and "full of pranks", more like a boy than a youth, and with a family that did not care. A year later, something had happened; he had made friends who encouraged him to exercise and lose weight. He appeared motivated, and the job specialist encouraged him to visit and attend an upper secondary school where it was possible for him to study only those subjects he had a particular interest in. This turned out to be a success. He was able to perform very well at exams and was provided with a proper education.

However, none of the youth interviewed state that they want sheltered work. They want to be "normal" and have permanent jobs and wages. In combination with the evidence that, for employment outcomes, rapid entry into the regular labor market is superior to

stepwise entry (Drake et al., 2012; S. Markussen & Røed, 2014), these data support the view that ordinary workplaces should be prioritized over sheltered ones. Cimera indicated that what is learned in a sheltered workshop is not always transferable to ordinary work (2011). I therefore suggest that work experience for vulnerable youth should primarily take place in ordinary workplaces. This is also the most common view among support givers in pilots.

Field notes and interviews with support givers suggest that it is not just the wishes and needs of vulnerable youth that are relevant to the applicability of the IPS principles to this target group. The context in which they find themselves can also influence what kind of approach it is possible to implement. In most pilots, competitive employment is not the main aim in the short term. The portfolio of this school advisor is one example:

> *"Beth" is an advisor covering two senior high schools with a total of about 1000 students. At the time of the interview, 98 students aged 16-21 were on the follow-up lists of these two schools because of drop-out or risk of drop-out. Eighteen of these students were helped into employment on ordinary wages in the ordinary labor market (only eight were permanently employed, however). For the other students, other support was provided, for example help to apply for other schools or courses or to find appropriate treatment or a place to live. (Field notes).*

Return to ordinary school, work practice as part of school (for example an apprenticeship), in combination with school or as an alternative to school for a short period, is seen as more relevant by support givers in a short-term perspective.

Why so little focus on competitive employment for this target group? First, several studies have produced support for a link between completion of school and better employment opportunities over the life span (Brekke, 2014; Falch & Nyhus, 2011; Kim, 2013; E. Markussen, Frøseth, Sandberg, Lødding, & Borgen, 2011; Sletten & Hyggen, 2013). In many countries, this has made the authorities take action. In Norway, the Program for Enhanced Completion of Upper Secondary Education and Training, which was launched in 2014, is just

one of many initiatives in recent decades.[1] Drop-out youth with rights to upper secondary schooling (normally aged 15-21 according to the Norwegian regulations (Ministry of Education and Research, 1998)) who have lost interest in and motivation for school will thus find that the school and other services will attempt to help them to return to and complete school. Competitive employment is not viewed as a short-term aim, but rather as a long-term aim for these youth. For older vulnerable youth (22+), ordinary work is more often also a short-term aim.

Second, whereas the school system aims to keep youth in school and help drop-outs to return, the implementation of supported employment can produce incentives in the opposite direction, by offering the possibility of paid employment to students with low motivation. Thus, the combination of school and job-oriented services could be problematic. This was clearly the case in one of the pilots where they tried to implement SE at an upper secondary school. They solved the challenge by subordinating the use of ordinary workplaces and work to the schools' goal of education and school completion.

Third, very few support givers in the pilots knew of SE. Exceptions were found in three pilots. Although several support givers provide job-related follow-up, only a few of them would qualify as job specialists by the standards of IPS or SE (Drake et al., 2012; EUSE, 2014). The data enabled me to compare the support provided in pilots with job specialists to pilots without such specialists. I found that the presence of a job specialist with knowledge of SE or IPS in services for vulnerable youth is likely to increase the ability to see the possibility of work experience or employment, as well as to facilitate it. This was particularly evident in one of the pilots, where a job specialist with long experience of job inclusion nearly always saw ordinary

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[1]   https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/education/school/innsiktsartikler/program-for-bedre-gjennomforing-i-videregaende-opplaring/id2005356/

work as a possible option. He knew of an appropriate workplace, and had the experience and the guts to contact the employer and help the youth out so that he got a taste of working.

Both competitive employment and work experience in ordinary workplaces seem to be capable of meeting needs for mastery, motivation, and inclusion. Ordinary employment is important for everyone in the long term, but school completion can be important in the short term for some vulnerable youth, particularly those of school age (15-21). Facilitation of short-time work experience is relevant for all and more compatible with school. In order to meet the needs and address the context of vulnerable youth, I therefore suggest that the IPS principle of competitive employment – if applied to vulnerable youth – should incorporate other forms of work experience than just competitive employment. This seems to be in line with youth needs and will make it easier to avoid conflicts with the schools' mandate. It is also in line with EUSE's suggestions on work experience placements for NEETS (EUSE, 2014, p.91), as well as EUSE's conclusion on work experience placements, which states that such placements should be viewed as "a means to an end and not as the end result" (Ibid., p.26).

3.2 IPS principle 8: Time-unlimited and Individualized Follow-up

Continuous follow-along supports meet the needs described by several authors who address the challenges of the transition into adulthood for vulnerable populations (Johansson & Höjer, 2012; Osgood et al., 2010; Xie et al., 2014). This has been one of the pillars of supported employment. The IPS fidelity scale suggests that supports are provided by a variety of people, "including treatment team members, family, friends, co-workers (natural support), and employment specialists" (Drake et al., 2012, appendix, p.14). However, the intensity and content of such ongoing follow-up has received little attention in the research so far (Ibid.p.41). Drake et al. conclude that there is a need to develop "empirically based standards for what supports are needed, for how long, at what intensity, and for which kinds of clients" (p.42). My analysis did not fully answer all these questions, but provided some clarification.

Interviews with youth, employers and support givers demonstrated that vulnerable youth can profit from support at work both in relation to private and practical issues, such as getting up in the morning and transportation to work, and to other issues such as finances, housing, health, or treatment. One support giver's reflections show that transportation does not just mean transportation, it is also an opportunity for vital conversations:

> *Many times I have had to drive them to work. There are great distances here, and they do not have a car or driving license. I normally drive them to and from work 1-2 weeks after they start in a job to be sure that they get there. The car is the best place to talk. Then you can say what you mean. In the mornings, it's pretty quiet, because they are tired, me too. But we talk on the journey home. What they've done, what they would like to become. They have good and bad days, I try to talk them through it. I say you have to give it some more time. Try again tomorrow. Some I have had to wake up in the morning. We talk mostly about everyday things, where they are now and what it takes to get them where they want to go. (Support giver)*

The time spent in the car to and from work is used for preparations, de-briefings, advice on issues such as how to dress, reasons to stay home, and how to understand what happened at work that day. Some youth lack family or friends who can participate in such reflections. According to support givers, all the pilots had experienced a need for close individualized, long-term follow-up of vulnerable youth:

> *...you must follow up closely for a loooong time. You must be very patient. This also applies to close monitoring of employers, because many of them have very poor social skills. They do not always realize what they are getting. (Pilot leader)*

In the pilot referred to above, almost 50% of the participants had received support for more than two years, and quite a lot for five to six years or longer. The experience was similar in most pilots, suggesting that close and individualized follow-up delivered by a youth worker, job specialist, or "the right employer" can be an important factor contributing to successful employment.

Informants used the term "the right employer" quite often, by which they meant employers who were interested in youth, wanted to give them a chance, and had the required patience. These employers could offer work that matched youth interests, and had, according to themselves and support givers, an inclusive work environment that could provide the required level of follow-up at work. When employers describe successful work experiences, they often highlight that youth should be given responsibility and meaningful work tasks that they are able to handle:

> *He was given work tasks – real work tasks – and responsibilities that he was able to carry out. He was thus shown confidence. We set requirements. My staff were flexible and helped to give him a chance. They were involved in creating a good framework for this guy. He had little confidence, little or no belief that he could do anything. (Employer)*

The boy referred to above had dropped out of school during the autumn. Then, at his own wish and with help from the employment and welfare service, he was offered a job (3 months' work practice) at a local business. According to support givers, he completely changed his behavior and appearance – from being unmotivated, aggressive, and hard to cooperate with, to being an interested, friendly, and cooperative young man. He worked at this business for around six months and then decided to return to school, which he completed. Interviews with other employers contain similar stories.

Support at work to master work tasks can be important. However, interviews with support givers and employers show that it is not always the job tasks that are the real challenge. Issues relating to sudden absence, behavior in the workplace, and social inclusion seem to be important for some, for example being part of a work environment, having lunch with others, talking and taking active part:

> *The challenges are often connected to absence and that they do not let you know. Pilot staff say they tell the youth that they should take part in the social environment in the enterprise, and not drive off during lunch. Instead, they should bring a packed lunch and eat with the others. However, they are not used to this. Some of them find it difficult to socialize with "grown-ups". (Field notes)*

Support givers mentioned social anxiety as one possible explanation for why some youth found it difficult to socialize and have lunch together with the others. Others are challenged because of low self-confidence and lack of belief in themselves:

We had to boast of her a lot and be able to see the positive things, even though it was very difficult. We forced ourselves to say that "that was positive, that we support". My employee became very good at seeing positive things. And she came to me with her frustration. I also spent time with the girl, talked to her, and told her things that made her feel good. I said that there are two things you will learn when you work with me. One is that when we brag about you, then you must say "thank you". The second is that you should smile and look us in the eye. Because she was very serious, very careful and tried to avoid returning your look. I felt that that had something to do with her confidence. And if I allowed her to be bashful, then she might always just be bashful. I've learned through my own experience how important it is to return somebody's look and smile, because it opens so much inside oneself. And she became so beautiful that girl, eventually. It was very nice. She woke up. (Employer)

The girl referred to in the quote above improved her job quality, and when her closest co-worker became ill, she stepped in and did her job. Prior to work placement in this workplace, the girl had been a student at a special school for youth with disabilities. After this work experience, she decided to return to ordinary school, which she completed.

Support needs do change with time. Focus group interviews contain several examples of challenges arising somewhere along the line, where support is then needed in connection with psychological problems, lack of motivation, self-confidence, or other problems.

Some pilots have successfully attempted to establish natural supports at work for long-lasting and close individual support when the need arises. At one workplace, three colleges agreed to cooperate as mentors for a young boy with severe challenges. He was offered an apprenticeship at their workplace. They made it their aim to help this boy succeed:

We became extra-mothers for him. In the beginning, he was absent one, two, or three days a week. He has improved a lot, but still shows up 10 minutes late in the morning. (Employer)

After five years of close follow-up, including wake-up calls, home visits, and numerous "talks", he finally got his certificate. This example is rather untypical as regards the willingness and ability of an employer to provide follow-up, but it shows how intensive support can be needed.

Individualized support from an external service in a workplace can lead to problems of stigmatization and, as such, contribute to social exclusion instead of inclusion (Titmuss, 2006). One important issue is therefore to develop ways of providing support that do not lead to stigmatization. By natural support, I mean support that is activated among colleges already working there. The ability to develop natural support can be vital because, with this kind of support, it is easier to avoid stigmatization. In addition, natural support can be "present and close to the person" for a long time and therefore be ready to be activated when a need arises. This point has already been addressed elsewhere (Drake et al., 2012; Murphy, Mullen, & Spagnolo, 2005) in relation to support for persons with psychiatric disabilities. I interpret the needs of vulnerable youth demonstrated in the pilots as arguments in favor of also implementing natural support for vulnerable youth.

The findings clearly support the IPS principle of individualized and time-unlimited support for vulnerable youth. The data demonstrate a need to focus on facilitation of mastery and social inclusion in work with vulnerable youth, as well as close follow-up in connection with issues not directly relevant to work. This indicates that follow-up at work should not just focus on the job tasks, but also on social issues in the workplace: how to behave, what to say, and so forth. Cato Wadel has elaborated on the concept of incorporation and he finds that the processes of inclusion and exclusion can be rather subtle and difficult to address (Wadel, 2008). This challenges the support givers' ability to adopt a close enough perspective and follow up closely enough. Natural supports can contribute to that.

3.3 IPS principle 3: Integration of Rehabilitation and Mental Health Services

According to Drake et al. (2012), "IPS programs are closely integrated with mental health treatment teams" (p.35). This means that IPS specialists review client progress through participation in treatment team meetings. They help team members think about work and develop ideas for improving client functionalities. According to the IPS fidelity scale, an employment specialist carries out "all phases of employment service, including intake, engagement, assessment, job placement, job coaching, and follow-along supports before step down to less intensive employment support from another MH practitioner" (Mental Health practitioner) (Ibid, appendix, p.2). This principle has at least two important messages: 1) a team should coordinate the support, and 2) a specialist should be responsible for the entire process of job inclusion.

The involvement of mental health services will only be directly relevant for vulnerable youth who have mental health challenges. Coordination of services and support is often mentioned, however, as one type of need among vulnerable youth (Luecking, 2009; Osgood et al., 2010; Wehman, 2011). This is also the general experience in all the pilots. According to project workers, in order to achieve success it is vital to have the ability to cooperate with other services such as health services, psychiatric specialists, outreach services, and career consultants, as well as advisors at school and local employment and welfare offices that provide welfare benefits and measures for activation and work inclusion.

> *The key lesson is that you have to cooperate and that you are forced to rely on other services. You must have respect for the work of others, so you must tread a little beyond your own zone to make things work. You must tread a little into interfaces and vice versa. (Pilot leader)*

The pilots had developed different solutions for the coordination of support. Some adopted team approaches. Others coordinated the support through ad-hoc approaches in individual cases, and some through regular coordination meetings at which representatives of several services discussed challenges in ongoing cases. Some solved coordination issues by assigning responsibility for close follow-up and coordination of the support to ambulant

pilots/coaches. Some had integrated several services in such a way that two or more services were located in the same place and collaborated from there.

A few pilots had what resembled employment specialists who were responsible for job development and job inclusion processes. Some pilots had developed more generalized approaches, where the youth workers were responsible for employment services in addition to being responsible for support in connection with other issues.

Comparisons of field reports and interviews with support givers across pilots showed that youth workers with few clients were able to follow up more closely and for a longer time, if necessary. One of them was capable of providing this kind of support: every morning at six o'clock, he called one youth to wake him so that he would get to his work experience placement on time. On mornings when the boy did not answer the wake-up call, he drove home to him and took him to the workplace. The youth eventually got a job.

Youth workers in specialized approaches were able to spend more time on job development and follow-up of employers.

> *I inquired a little about this project in advance after getting info. And what excited me was the follow-up that these people do. We were told that they even wake the youth up in the morning. And that tells me about commitment. It tells me that it is possible to achieve something. They come here quite often, I would say, two to three times a month at least. Maybe even when I'm not here. They talk to everyone. To my department managers, to me, to the youth. The monitoring is much closer from these people than we have experienced before. Contact with the employment services normally goes via the employee. We have not had direct contact with the employment services like this before. (Employer)*

As discussed above, the need for close follow-up of issues such as job mastery, social inclusion, and long-term support, clearly indicates that the presence of a support giver with the competence and capacity to ensure such support in the workplace would be preferable. Several of these support needs were often left to the employer, but only the "right employers" have the knowledge or the competence required to provide sufficient follow-up, while most

probably do not. Youth workers in specialized approaches seem better suited to meet the work-related support needs of vulnerable youth and their employers.

Thus, I find that bringing the competence and capacity of a job specialist closer to services and generalist-orientated support givers is likely to improve the quality of employment services for vulnerable youth and should have a potential to contribute to better and more systematic use of work experience. The support team in one of the pilots can serve as example. The team consisted of five persons providing support to students aged 16-25 based at senior high school. The team members were a job specialist, a school advisor, a former employment and welfare advisor, a social worker with experience of outreach service, and a project leader with experience of youth work among immigrants. Although they were experienced support givers, most of them were inexperienced in job inclusion issues for persons with severe needs. The job specialist was assigned the role of tutor, helping and teaching the others on issues such as job development, job finding, and job match. Even though school advisors and teachers in general facilitated work experience for their students as part of their job, the methodological approach of the experienced job specialist meant much more systematic job development and facilitation of work-based learning in this institution.

Being responsible for close follow-up of vulnerable youth with severe needs for several years can be a very challenging task according to interviews with support givers. It can lead to burnout and loss of what Tilson and Simonsen describe as "principled optimism", which is often associated with successful support (2013, p.125). Shared responsibility in a support team can prevent burnout and loss of motivation among youth workers, according to these interviews.

Drake, Becker et al. have shown that integrated services are more effective than parallel services because "clinicians rather than clients assume the burden of coordination, consistency and coherence" (2003, p.51). This is also the experience in several of the pilots

included here. My analysis suggests that the message implicit in IPS principle 3 is also relevant to the target group of vulnerable youth: A team-based approach including the presence of a job specialist seems to be a good way to coordinate and facilitate high-quality, supported employment for vulnerable youth.

3.4 Applicability of IPS principles 2, 4, and 6

IPS principle 2 (Eligibility Based on Client Choice) means that starting IPS is based on client choice: "Clients are not excluded on the basis of readiness, diagnoses, symptoms, substance-use history, psychiatric hospitalizations, level of disability, or legal system involvement" (Drake et al., 2012, p.34). Few pilots practiced this approach. Most had pre-defined target groups and stuck to them. But the data contain examples of youth who were assumed not to be "work-ready" by support givers managing integrated work when provided with close follow-up and "the right employer".

> *We've had several eye-opening experiences with relatively heavy users who actually work very well in a job. It's all about us being close; that we find the right employer and follow up closely. (Youth worker)*

I interpret this as support for a zero exclusion approach to this target group. Zero exclusion means that "all clients interested in working have access to supported employment services regardless of job readiness factors" (Drake et al., 2012, appendix, p.6).

Data also show that basing participation on client choice can be difficult to practice, particularly in cases when youth withdraw and start on a rather destructive path. This is particularly relevant for under age youth, but also for NEETs in general (Van Parys & Struyven, 2012). This challenge places heavy demands on competence, service flexibility, and efforts by support givers to reach out to troubled youth, as well as on their ability to motivate and meet youth needs.

> *This boy grew up with his father who was a drug addict, and without his mother. He was living in a children's institution when we got the case. He didn't follow the rules, didn't show up where he was*

meant to. Was out on the move. No control of where he was. He had drug problems. Then they put a

residential team on the case, which means you get a person who follows you up closely. This was a

case where we did not know what to do because he didn't want anything. When the residential team

came on board, everything changed. They followed him. Looked for him and found him. Took him to

the people that he needed to see. Through this team, he also got in touch with the drug team. They

managed to build a relationship with him. (Employment supervisor)

Outreach services can be important in such situations, as well as communicative skills. I propose that vulnerable youth should not be excluded without support givers making efforts to meet their needs.

Experience from all the pilots supports the view that services targeting vulnerable youth should address client preferences and choices, strengths, and experience (IPS principle 4: Attention to Client Preferences). However, helping youth with low self-esteem and a long history of failure and defeats to define their own preferences and strengths requires some extra effort. Most pilots had developed individual or group-based approaches to help them discover their own interests and preferences. Examples include motivational courses (two or three weeks), peer groups, activities of various kinds, and the use of visual methods and approaches that promote a positive emotional climate and focus on what works (for example Motivational Interviewing and Appreciative Inquiry), as well as individual conversations with youth workers aimed at building close and secure relations. Drake et al. devote much attention to clients' previous job experience as a source of ideas for future work (2012). This is also relevant for some vulnerable youth, but most of them do not have much work experience and have little knowledge of working life. My analysis suggests that finding a job that suits their interests and abilities will require greater emphasis on exploring and discovering the youths' interests and skills, in addition to focusing on previous work experience.

IPS principle 6 (Rapid Job Search) underlines that the approach to open employment should proceed at a fast pace in contrast to lengthy pre-employment assessment, training, and

counseling. Youth workers in all the pilots report a need to respond quickly to the needs of the youth when they "are motivated". "If you wait, they might change their mind and disappear" is a common experience.

> *What everybody should understand is that for youth everything is fleeting. Things change from day to day. If you get hold of a youth who is interested, then you need to bring him in right away. You cannot give him an appointment in two weeks; it is not certain that he will bother to meet you again. In two weeks, he has maybe moved, started with a new drug and made new friends. So, that's no use. (Employment supervisor)*

A quick response can take place in several ways, for instance through frequent dialogues or meetings, participation in courses, or as work experience or employment. My empirical data do not provide information that is suitable for assessing whether the quick response should also be job-related. However, as already mentioned, my data show that vulnerable youth often want normal lives and jobs. Common wishes in my data are education, job, home, family, a car, money, kids, etc. Based on the finding from many studies that rapid job search is superior to stepwise approaches in terms of later employment (Drake et al., 2012; S. Markussen & Røed, 2014), I find that a rapid job search approach is also reasonable in relation to vulnerable youth. However, since they will not always aim for competitive employment in the short-term, a minor adjustment of principle 6 seems appropriate: from rapid job search for competitive employment to rapid search for work experience in line with user needs and preferences. As previously argued, the work experience should take place in ordinary workplaces and include the possibility of employment if that is desirable.

4. Conclusion: IPS principles adjusted to the needs of vulnerable youth

My overall aim has not been to change the IPS principles, but to assess their applicability to support for and job inclusion of vulnerable youth. According to my analysis, the needs and the situation of vulnerable youth mean that some modifications could improve

the applicability of the principles to this target group. Table 3 provides an overview of discussions and suggested modifications.

Table 3: Discussions and suggested modifications

My findings support placing less weight on competitive employment and more on work experience in integrated settings. A reformulation of principle 1 to *Work experience or employment in ordinary workplaces is the primary goal* would bring it more into line with the needs and situation of vulnerable youth.

Since some vulnerable youth – and possibly those who need support the most – tend to withdraw from support, I find reason to emphasize the need for extra effort to stay in touch with and establish a relationship with vulnerable youth in cases where they seem to isolate themselves. I therefore propose a supplement to principle 2 if applied to vulnerable youth: *Eligibility based on client choice, but no exclusion without motivational efforts and team assessments.*

Adding a job specialist with knowledge of SE/IPS to support teams for vulnerable youth represents a methodological improvement in terms of facilitating work experience and work-based learning compared to solutions without such competence. A team approach appears to be promising in terms of coordinating support and sharing responsibility for long-term support among support givers. A reformulation of IPS principle 3 to: *Integration of a job specialist in support teams,* would bring it more into line with the needs of vulnerable youth.

Attention to client preferences is as important in relation to vulnerable youth as for other groups. However, since they are young and often inexperienced, and often have a long history of defeat and failure, extra efforts are needed to help them define their preferences. I find that modifying IPS principle 4 to: *Discovery of – and attention to – client preferences* is more in line with the needs of vulnerable youth.

Benefits counseling is as relevant to vulnerable youth as to other job seekers. No modifications to IPS principle 5 therefore seem to be needed: *Personalized Benefits Counseling.*

My data support the need for rapid response in relation to vulnerable youth, and, when the aim is employment, other research provides strong arguments for rapid job search and placement. To fit better with the needs of vulnerable youth who are not aiming for competitive employment in the short term, modifying principle 6 from Rapid Job Search to *Rapid search for Appropriate Work Experience* would make it more applicable.

Complex and continuous support needs challenge the ability to build relationships with employers and locate appropriate work even more. I therefore strongly underline the importance of IPS principle 7: *Systematic Job Development.*

My data clearly support IPS principle 8, also in the case of vulnerable youth, but show an increased need to focus the support on some areas. A reformulation of this principle to: *Time-unlimited and individualized support with particular focus on mastery, social inclusion, and natural support*, would make it more applicable to support for vulnerable youth.

4.1 Limitations and implications for future research

There are several limitations to this study. The article is not based on an empirical test of the IPS principles in relation to support for vulnerable youth. I have assessed the applicability of the IPS principles to a target group that differs from that normally assigned to IPS, based on knowledge about this target group's needs, situation, and experience of job inclusion. My study has generated several hypotheses to test. The main hypotheses are 1) the IPS principles are applicable to vulnerable youth, and 2) modifications of the principles as described above is likely to increase their applicability to this target group. An actual test of support in line with IPS for this target group is necessary to produce evidence that such support is actually applicable to vulnerable youth, as well as to check whether my proposals

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are reasonable. To test my findings, a controlled trial of IPS could be carried out on a group of youth who have dropped out of school or are at risk of dropping out.

Even though I have read and analyzed the data carefully several times, there are many interesting particularities related to youth, employers, and support givers that I have not addressed in this article. Every single youth in any pilot has individual needs and will need individualized support. My aim was not to present all the details and particularities, but to discover and describe major patterns and contents relating to selected themes across this rich material. This approach involves a risk of producing very general findings. In my view, the data I found were not too general and were thus suitable for assessing the applicability of the IPS principles to vulnerable youth in the way I have done.

I have chosen a rather wide and heterogeneous definition of the target group. "Vulnerable youth" can mean youth with severe mental challenges, drug problems, or learning disabilities, or youth with only minor challenges and good work ability if they only find the right class or the right job. This vague definition of the target group can be criticized. However, in local communities, the problem and response seem to be defined more based on the actual situation of youth (dropout, jobless) than on their potential diagnosis. The support givers in the pilots provide follow-up for a wide variety of young people. In the end, the approach always has to be individualized. However, I have not carried out a detailed study of possible systematic differences in needs and approaches related to various sub-groups of vulnerable youth in this article. This is a limitation. IPS has previously been assessed for several "sub-groups" of vulnerable youth with mental challenges (see for instance Bond et al., 2014; Burke-Miller et al., 2012; Ferguson, 2013). More knowledge is needed, however, particularly as regards vulnerable youth with other challenges than severe mental challenges.

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Tables

Table 1: Data overview

Project	Type of data	N	Topics	Informants
A	Field reports from case visits (2012, 2013, and 2015) based on observations, interviews and group discussions.	3x13	Needs of youth, characteristics of participants, cooperation, organization, surroundings, involved services, methods, measures, outcome, observations	Pilot teams, Employment and Welfare supervisors, cooperating services, other key informants selected locally
	Interviews with youth	23 + 13	Needs, challenges, contents of support received, experience, outcome	Youth aged 18-25. 13 youths were interviewed twice (the second interview two years after the first)
	Interviews with employers	13	Experiences related to employment and support	Managers or mentors
	Focus group interviews	25	Description of youths' progress from the start until the end of support. Includes information about family, childhood, neighborhood, interests, skills, health, network, school and work experience, support received.	Pilot teams, Employment and Welfare supervisors, school representatives, outreach services, other collaborating services
	Service records	13	Quality, contents, and local assessments of support provided	Pilot teams
	Aggregated data of participants in each pilot	-	Gender, age, problem type, service provided, measures taken, results and outcomes for 951 participants	Pilot teams
B	Interviews with participants	9	Needs, contents of support, experience, outcome	Participants aged 22-60
	Interviews with mentors	4	Experience of follow-up at work	Mentors employed at the job inclusion site
	Interviews with employers	8	Experiences related to employment and support	Some of these employers were also mentors.
	Workshop summaries and notes	4	User needs, cooperation, methods, experience, outcome	Pilot workers
	Local project documents	4	Group work notes, support logs of 20 participants	Pilot workers
C	Interviews - phase 1	8	Needs of youth, methods, experience, outcome, cooperation	Job specialist, school advisors, Employment and Welfare supervisors, school nurse
	interviews - phase 2	5	Needs of youth, methods, experience, outcome, cooperation	Each member of the pilot team
	Focus group interviews – phase 2	2	Description of youths' progress from the start until the end of support. Includes information about family, childhood, neighborhood, interests, skills, health, network, school and work experience, support received	Job specialists and cooperating services, employer, school advisor, school manager, teacher
	Aggregated data of participants	-	Gender, age, problem type, service provided, measures taken, results and outcomes for 56 participants	Pilot leader
	Pilot documents	1	Aim, methods	Pilot team
	Workshop summary	3	Methods, experience, outcome, cooperation	Pilot team

Table 2: Themes for data selection and summarized findings

IPS	Themes	Summarized findings across pilots and informant groups	Differences across pilots?	Differences across informants?
	Wants, needs, context, and situation of vulnerable youth	*Many needs:* finances, "paperwork", finding a place to live, getting in contact with other services, completing school, getting a job, becoming active, socializing, participating, thinking positively, believing in oneself, becoming optimistic, helping to deal with psychological or other problems, feeling safe, living a normal life. *Context/situation differ individually:* Some in school, some are NEETs, many alone, trouble with families, long history of failure, long history as benefit recipient.	Mostly similarities across pilots. Always differences at the individual level.	Mainly similarities. Support givers point to mastery as important. Youth underline socializing and being part of something. Employers: mastery and inclusion.
1	*Role of competitive employment. What kind of work or employment meets youth needs?*	Some want jobs immediately; many in the long term; few do not want a job. Both competitive and other kinds of work can lead to higher self-esteem/confidence, activity, participation. Match of task, youth interest and supportive environment seems important. School completion assessed as more important by informants. Work experience as part of school, in combination with school or as alternative to school for a short period considered relevant for many. Ordinary jobs give relevant learning, pay and can solve financial challenges, but not always in the short term.	All pilots provided support for open employment, some more than others. Some only target ordinary employment; others refer youth with high support needs to sheltered workshops. Work practice in ordinary workplaces most common.	Many employers describe major improvements in troubled youth when included and given responsibility. Support givers and youth also share this view.
2	*Recruitment. Role of client choice. Reasons for exclusion. Employment regardless of problem scope?*	Normally referred based on dropout, problem behavior, or concern. Client choice normally addressed and listened to, but some contacted regardless of own interest because of age or demands from Employment and Welfare service. Exclusion if not in local target group, after long-term non-attendance, or based on lack of result. Some considered not work-ready managed work when followed up closely and with good job match. Permanent employment achieved for some.	Target groups varied on factors such as age, problem scope, and arena of contact. Some pilots have outreach services and pay visits to those dropping out, some do not.	This topic mainly relevant for support givers. However, youth confirm that participation is also based on their choice.
3	*Need for coordination of support. Models of coordination.*	Support from several services is a common need. Youth with severe needs often need to cooperate with many services, others with fewer. Mental health services not always relevant; school, work, employment and welfare often relevant. Some pilots have integrated support teams, some regular coordination meetings, some services are collocated, some coordinate individually and ad-hoc in ongoing cases.	Coordination needs are similar, but models differ.	Employers less aware of this need. Support givers main contributors. Youth more concerned with good relations with main support giver than their need for coordination.
4	*Client preferences. How and why?*	Youth preferences paid much attention, but extra efforts needed to help youth discover and define strengths and preferences. History of failure has led to low self-esteem; they do not believe they are needed and can contribute. These needs addressed individually and on group basis in 2-3 week or longer courses prior to job.	Similar needs in all pilots. Models for meeting these needs differ in length and form, but have much in common in terms of contents.	Less relevant for employers. Support givers and youth have similar descriptions.
5	*Role and importance of benefits counseling*	High benefits can lead to reluctance to take a job because a job might lead to loss of benefit. Support givers need to pay attention to this topic for some youth.	Experienced in all pilots.	Mainly similar experiences.
6	*Needs related to time (tempo) and aim of response.*	Rapid response viewed as important and necessary. Youth need "to be seen", "to be heard", or that something that can be interesting and relevant for them happens. Risk of loss of contact if response not rapid.	Similar in all pilots.	Mainly support givers who provide this information.
7	*Job development. Possibilities and difficulties.*	Systematic job development helps find jobs that match client's interests and needs. Complex and continuous support needs challenge the ability of the helper to find appropriate work even more.	Similar needs in all pilots. Job development solved differently in pilots. Some with job specialists, some without.	Youth/employers appreciate reliable follow up. Support givers underline need for job development.
8	*Support needs when in job. Topics, where, when, for whom?*	At work: social inclusion, clear messages, mastery. Outside work: waking up in the morning, transport, health/treatment, finances, food. Support needs change with time. Needs always individual. Seems important to facilitate mastery, social inclusion and natural supports to avoid stigmatization and ensure long-term support.	Mainly similar experience across pilots.	Support givers underline need for long-term support more than youth and employers.

Table 3: Discussions and suggested modifications

IPS principle according to Drake et al. (2012)	Discussion summary	IPS-principles modified according to needs of vulnerable youth
1 Competitive Employment	Both competitive employment and work experience in ordinary workplaces can meet needs for mastery, motivation, and inclusion. Ordinary employment important for all in the long term, but school completion can be important in the short term for vulnerable adults of school age (15-21), if achievable. Facilitation of work experience relevant and more compatible with school.	**Work experience or employment in ordinary workplaces is the primary goal**
2 Eligibility Based on Client Choice	The data contain examples of youth who were assumed not to be "work-ready" by support givers managing integrated work when provided with close follow-up. I interpret this as support for a zero exclusion approach. Since some vulnerable youth tend to withdraw from support, I find reason to emphasize the need for extra effort to get in touch in cases where they seem to isolate themselves.	**Eligibility based on Client Choice, but no exclusion without motivational efforts and team assessments**
3 Integration of Rehabilitation and Mental Health Services	Support from several services is a common need. Mental health services are not always relevant. Teams with an integrated job specialist are more robust with a potential to improve methods for job inclusion, work-based learning, ability to coordinate support, and help support givers maintain an optimistic spirit.	**Integration of a Job Specialist in Support Teams**
4 Attention to Client preferences	Highly relevant, but assessment should build less on previous job experience and more on discovery of interest, skills, and potential. Extra efforts needed to help youth without motivation to find own strengths and preferences.	**Discovery of – and Attention to – Client Preferences**
5 Personalized Benefits Counseling	As relevant for some vulnerable youth as for other job seekers. High benefits can lead to reluctance to get a job because a job might lead to loss of benefit. Supported without modifications.	**Personalized Benefits Counseling**
6 Rapid Job Search	Rapid response viewed as important. Since permanent employment is often not a short-term aim, other forms of work experience should also be a possible aim.	**Rapid Search for Appropriate Work-Experience**
7 Systematic Job Development	Complex and continuous support needs challenge the ability to build relations with employers and locate appropriate work even more. Systematic job development helps find jobs that match client interest and needs. Supported without modifications.	**Systematic Job Development**
8 Time-Unlimited and Individualized Support	The data demonstrate a need to focus on facilitation of mastery, social inclusion and the establishment of natural supports to avoid stigmatization. Also important to follow up on areas not directly relevant to work. The support team can deal with this.	**Time-unlimited and individualized support, with particular focus on mastery, social inclusion, and natural support**