VIRTUAL REALITY JOB INTERVIEW TRAINING
An Enhancement to Supported Employment

Research at Thresholds

The Thresholds Research Department works with university partners to help members engage in grant-funded research projects. These studies evaluate interventions & models that contribute to evidence-based practices, which promote recovery among individuals with serious mental illness. This is a review of one such study.

Virtual Reality Job Interview Training (VR-JIT)
Also Known as *The "Molly" Study*

- The Molly study was completed in collaboration with The University of Michigan & Northwestern University from 2016-2021.

- **The study tested an interactive, computerized job interview program. Members logged in and underlined interviewed with a virtual hiring manager named Molly Porter.**

- Members practiced job interviewing while getting real-time feedback about their performance.

- Members also created sample job applications & resumes, and explored educational content about getting a job, like what to wear to a job interview, how to research a position, and more!

Molly Porter, the virtual hiring manager from the "Molly" job interview Program.

How is the Molly Study Related to IPS?

- **Individualized Placement and Support (IPS) is the cornerstone of one of Thresholds' Original 6 Goals to help all members who want to work obtain meaningful employment.**

- IPS is the gold standard, evidence-based model of supported employment.

- The goal of the Molly Study was to add a new tool into IPS's tool belt, by providing interview support to members engaged in IPS.

5 IPS Teams Participated in the Study

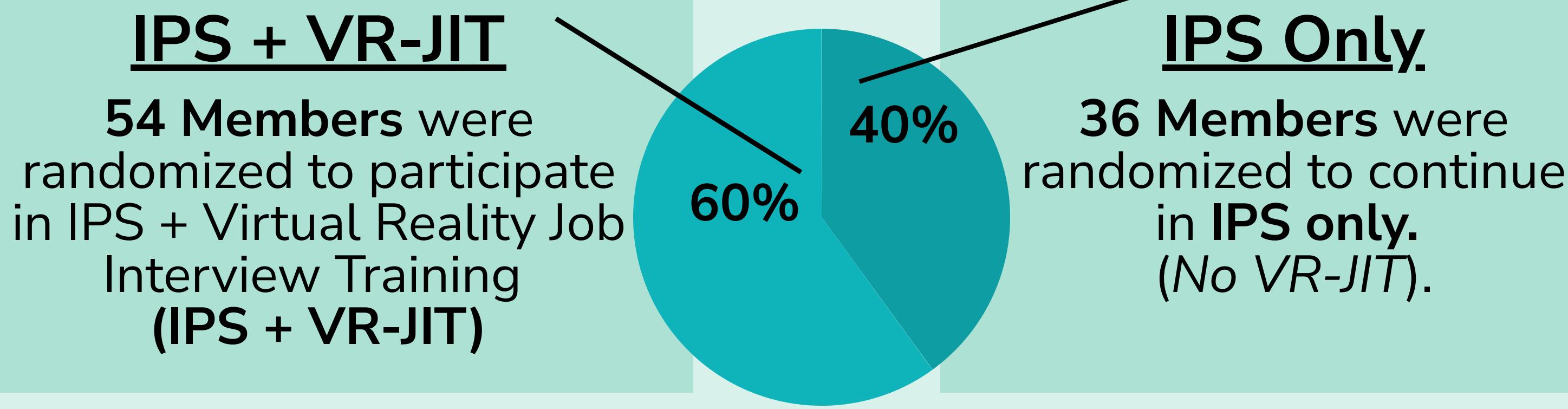**90** Members From IPS Joined the Study

32 IPS Staff Members Took Part in the Study

Thresholds IPS Programs maintained full IPS Fidelity during the study.

STUDY BREAKDOWN

Study Design

IPS + VR-JIT
54 Members were randomized to participate in IPS + Virtual Reality Job Interview Training **(IPS + VR-JIT)**

60%

40%

IPS Only
36 Members were randomized to continue in **IPS only.** (*No VR-JIT*).
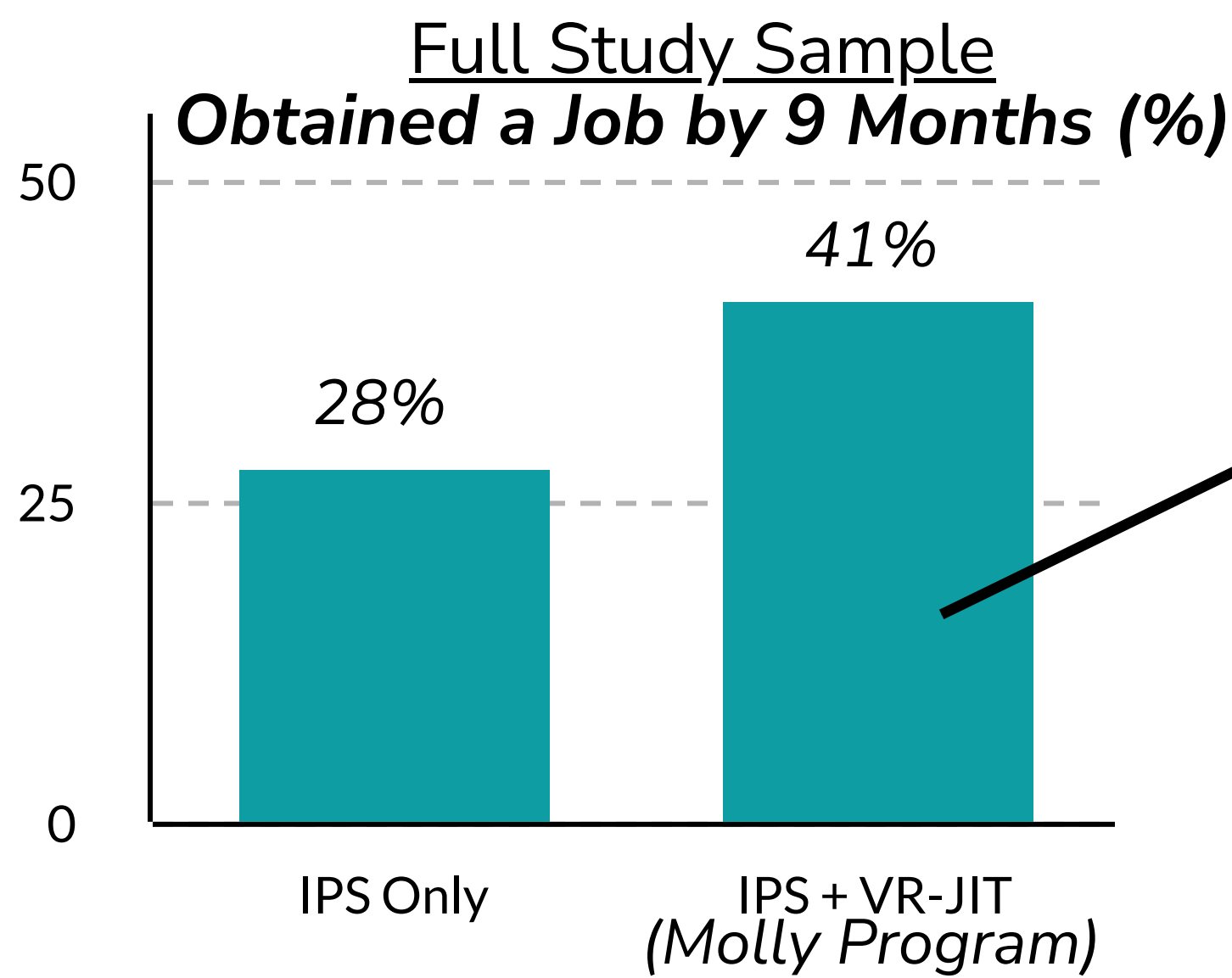
"It gave me a sense of being a little bit more comfortable and knowing what and what not to say and how to look the person in the eye. **BECAUSE TO BE HONEST, THE JOB I HAVE NOW IS DUE TO MOLLY"**
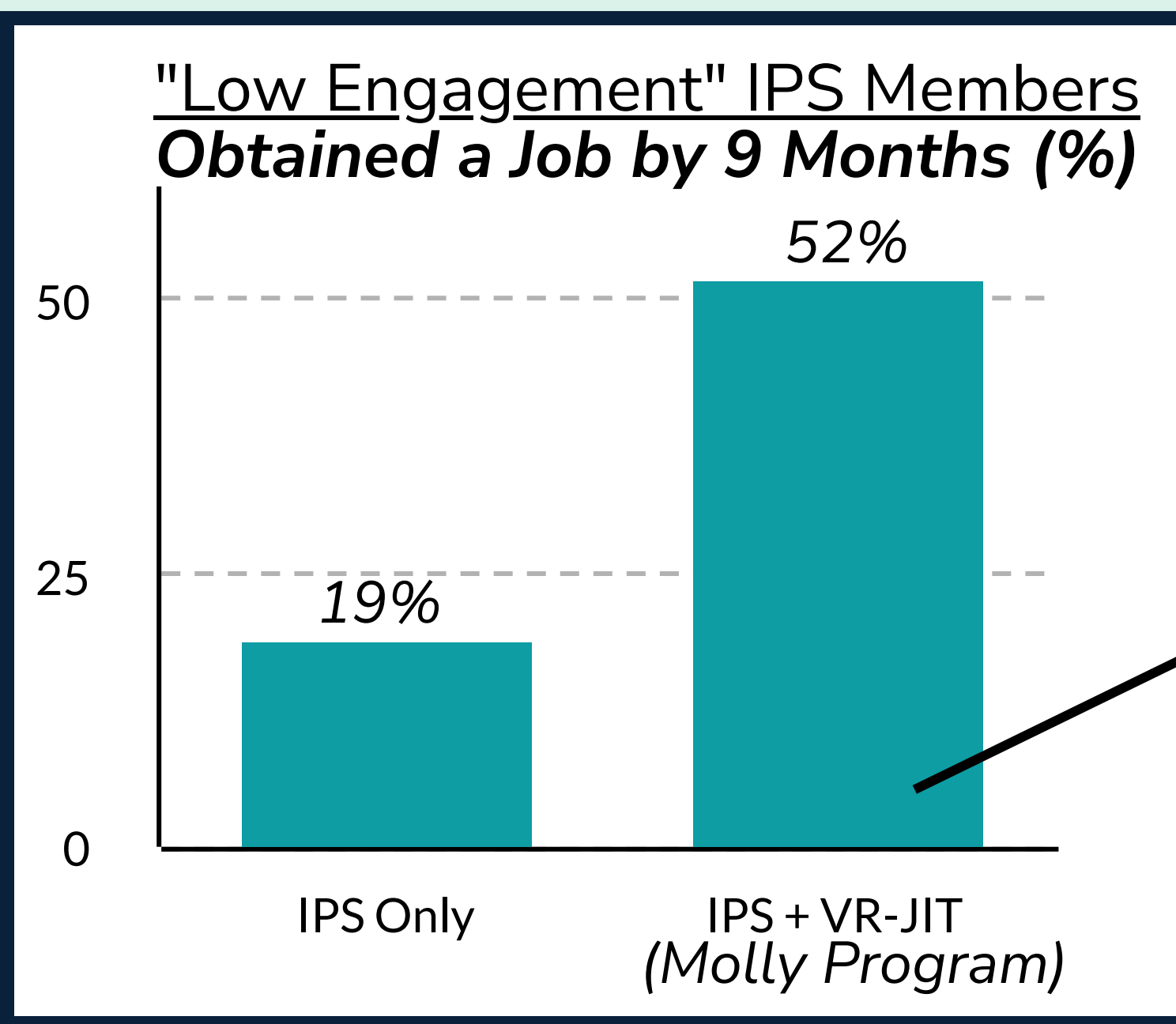-IPS Member

Study Outcomes

The Molly Job Interview Program Helped Members Get Jobs!

Full Study Sample
Obtained a Job by 9 Months (%)

50

25

0

28%

41%

IPS Only

IPS + VR-JIT
(Molly Program)

Study Members who participated in VR-JIT were 13% more likely to get a job compared to members who participated in IPS Only!

I have a lot of anxiety... especially in interviews, so **it helped calm me by just practicing with the the person in the video.**
-IPS Member

"Low Engagement" IPS Members
Obtained a Job by 9 Months (%)

50

25

0

19%

52%

IPS Only

IPS + VR-JIT
(Molly Program)

VR-JIT had an even bigger impact for members who were enrolled in IPS for 3 months+ without getting a job.

Among these "low-engagement" IPS members, IPS+VR-JIT participants were 33% more likely to get a job compared to IPS Only members.

"I HAVEN'T WORKED IN 21 YEARS. And so this was a really big step for me. And *it helped me get my confidence back again..."*
-IPS Member

Overall, VR+JIT Also Helped Members:

↑
Increase Job Interview Skills

↑
Increase Job Interview Confidence

↓
Decrease Job Interview Anxiety

Members who I know that had [used] Molly, they were a little bit more confident and were like, okay, **you can sit back, and I will do this on my own**.
-IPS Staff

CONCLUSIONS: *What Does this Mean for Members & IPS?*

The Virtual Reality Job Interview Training Program may be most helpful for members who have been enrolled in IPS for 3 months or longer without obtaining a job. This means it can be a great tool for IPS staff to use with members who may need extra supports getting a job!

Citation: Smith, Smith, Blajeski, Ross, Jordan, Bell, McGurk, Mueser, Burke-Miller, Oulvey, Fleming, Nelson, Brown, Prestipino, Pashka, & Razzano (2021). "RCT of Virtual Reality Job Interview Training for Individuals with SMI in IPS Supported Employment." Psychiatric Services.