

Key Terms for Employers: An overview of terms when working with individuals with disabilities and Employment Specialists

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Overview

- Person-First Language
- Disabilities
- Job Coach role and terms
- Working with People with Disabilities
- Types of Employment



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Person First Language

- Puts a person before a diagnosis
- Describes what a person “has” rather than what a person “is”
- Intended to avoid marginalization or dehumanization

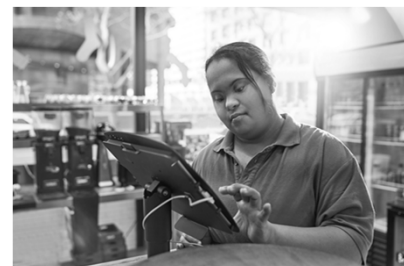
Example: “Stacy has autism” rather than “Stacy is autistic”

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Disability

“A physical or mental condition that limits a person’s movement, senses or activities.”

- **Physical Disability** - can affect an individual’s mobility, stamina, or dexterity.
 - Ex: brain or spinal injuries, cerebral palsy, respiratory, visual or hearing
- **Intellectual Disability** - affects an individual’s ability to think and understand. Life skills that can be impacted include certain conceptual, social, and practical skills.
 - Ex: ASD, Down Syndrome, or Developmental Delay



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The Job Coach's Role

- **Job Coach:** A person who helps train an employee on their role and develops necessary accommodations towards gaining independence.
 - Ex: Job Exploration, Situational Assessment, Fading, Follow-Along
- **Reasonable Workplace Accommodation:** A modification that helps a person with a disability do their job.
 - Ex: Job Coach, modified work schedule, modified work equipment.



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Working with People with Disabilities

- **Undue Hardship:** An accommodation that would place a substantial hardship on a business
- **Accessible:** A facility that has no barriers to entry or access
 - Handicap accessible ramps.
- **Service Animal:** An animal that has been trained to assist people with disabilities
- **Essential Functions:** Necessary tasks for a role that an accommodations can be developed.



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Types of Employment

- **Integrated Employment:** When people with disabilities work alongside mostly people without disabilities
- **Competitive Employment:** Work where a person with a disability as someone without a disability would be paid for that role
- **Supported Employment:** The process of helping a person with a disability obtain and maintain employment
- **Customized Employment:** A way of personalizing a role to meet the needs of both the employee and employer



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Closing

- Hiring people with disabilities can provide many benefits to your business.
- Job coaches work to ensure the satisfaction of both the employee and the employer.
- The way we talk about people with disabilities has a strong effect on them and the people around them.



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Resources & Funding

- Rehabilitation Research & Training Center on Employer Practices for Individuals with Disabilities
(VCU-RRTC-EP) <https://ep.vcurrtec.org/>
- National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (Grant #90RT5041)



Working with Employment Specialists to Create A More Integrated Work Environment

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Understanding The Needs of The Client and Their Support Network:

- Understanding their needs around work preferences when searching for employment
- Asking for the input of their support network(s) in assessing and prioritizing these needs
- These needs vary from client to client.

2

Skill Building Through Project SEARCH

- Completed the school to work transition program, Project SEARCH
- The two clients completed an internship with the Materials Management department.
- Enjoyed the systematic and routine work
- Taught transferable skills that can be utilized in other community work settings



3

Finding The Right Fit For Employment

- Searching for the right position that aligns with the client's needs and skill sets
- Finding the right job is important for many reasons:
 - Enhances the client's well-being and sense of purpose
 - Fosters the goal of achieving independence
 - Aids in job retention
- Finding the right business environment and work culture



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Interviewing To Onboarding

- The Vitamin Shoppe typically conducts group interviews when looking to hire.
- Touring the facility and seeing the different jobs within the warehouse
- Building relationships with Human Resources and facility managers



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Training To Become A Health Enthusiast

- Management works with the employment specialists to foster the success of these individuals in a number of ways such as:
 - Identifying a strong Health Enthusiast mentor within the various positions
 - Being flexible with the client in the training process and with productivity requirements
 - Being open to incorporating additional training techniques for client
 - Allowing clients to cross train into other available positions to determine the best fit



6

Integrating Supported Employment Practices Into The Work Culture

- Open to continuing education about supported employment practices
- Supports staff on all levels to attend inclusivity trainings
- Enforces the promotion of disability awareness practices by all staff



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Continuing A Partnership With the RRTC

- Maintains open communication
- Continuously discussing the needs of the business
- Relies on RRTC employment specialists to make a good match



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VCU Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on
Employer Practices for Individuals with Disabilities

The Importance of Disability Specific Etiquette Awareness

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Introduction to Disability Specific Etiquette

- Important to know basic disability etiquette to serve as a guide
- Be aware that not every individual with a disability require the same type or level of support.
- Some populations of individuals with disabilities have specific considerations that are unique to their disability.



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Visual Impairments/Vision Loss

- Some individuals may have limited sight, distorted sight, or may not be able to see at all. There are varying degrees of visual impairments.
- Visual impairments are those which cannot be corrected with the use of glasses or contact lenses.
- Some of these individuals will need written information in large print, braille, or some form of audio.



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Visual Impairments/Vision Loss

- Introduce yourself upon entering the room.
- Speak directly to the person, not to their companion.
- Do not shout when you speak. People with vision loss can often still hear
- Include details when describing things to someone with vision loss
- It is OKAY to use phrases like “nice to see you” because it is still nice to see someone even if they have vision loss

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Auditory Disability/Deaf

- Individuals with an auditory disability may not be able to hear at all, while others may be able to hear a small amount. Hearing loss can affect one or both ears. Hearing loss can also range from mild to severe.
- Some individuals use the term “hard of hearing” to describe a person who communicates through spoken language and may use hearing aids or have cochlear implants.
- Deaf people can hear very little to not at all. Deaf people often use sign language to communicate.



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Auditory Disability/Deaf

- If you see two people signing with one another, do not stare. They may be having a private conversation
- Make eye contact and look at the person you're communicating with rather than the translator
- Greetings: Wave casually, not frantically, and wave in the person's peripheral vision field
- If you do know sign language it is appropriate to use; during introductions, sign your name using the alphabet.

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Mobility Disability/Impairments

- A mobility disability, also referred to as a physical disability, describes an individual's inability to use one or more extremities. Mobility impairments can be conditions present at birth or the result of an injury or illness.
- A lack of strength needed to walk, grasp objects, or lift items is often a characteristic as a mobility disability. An individual with a mobility impairment may use a wheelchair, crutches, or a walker to assist with mobility.



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Mobility Disability/Impairments

- Avoid touching or leaning on an individual's wheelchair.
- Keep ramps and wheelchair accessible doors unlocked and unblocked.
- If the counter of your business is too high, walk around the counter and provide direct assistance that way.
- Be aware of people's reach limits. Place items within reach and ensure there is a clear path to travel.
- People with respiratory or heart conditions, may have mobility needs.

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Verbal Expression Disability

- Some individuals may have difficulty with speaking, communicating their thoughts accordingly, and/or their speech may be difficult to understand.
- These challenges could be related to a cognitive impairment or with the physical production of sounds.
- An important consideration to note is that not every individual that has difficulty with expressive language experiences difficulty with language comprehension.



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Verbal Expression Disability

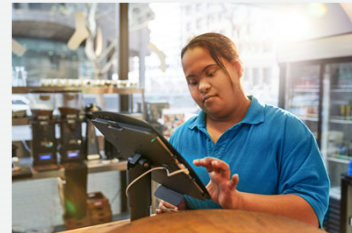
- Concentrate on what the individual is saying
- Indicate when you do or do not understand what the individual is trying to communicate
- Provide wait time for the individual to finish or repeat what they are saying
- If you are still having difficulty with understanding offer to have them communicate through another method

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Developmental Disability

- Developmental disability also encompasses intellectual or cognitive disabilities.
- Individuals with a developmental disability may be impacted in a variety of ways and at different levels of severity.
- Individuals with a developmental disability may experience an impact on their physical, mental, and emotional development. The learning and processing of new information may be challenging and repetition can be helpful.



Developmental Disability

- Provide information in clear, simple wording and use concrete concepts opposed to abstract.
- It is helpful to break down complex or lengthy instructions into smaller steps.
- Allow wait time for processing information and for the individual to generate a response.
- Ensure that the individual has an understanding of information discussed by asking them to summarize.
- Executive functioning abilities may be impaired, the use of lists and schedules are often helpful.

Mental Health Disability

- A mental health disability can include a broad range of diagnoses.
- Individuals with a mental health disability may have difficulty coping with the tasks and/or interactions of everyday life.
- This disability is commonly referred to as an “invisible disability”.



Mental Health Disability

- It is important to build good rapport and trust within the working relationship.
- Have an open line of communication between you and the individual.
- If the individual appears to be confused or upset, they could be overwhelmed or anxious.
- Employers and human resource personnel should be familiar with available resources

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Importance of Disability Specific Etiquette Awareness

- Improve customer service and employee relations.
- Help to establish a successful relationship between stakeholders.
- Ability to identify reasonable workplace accommodations.



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How Recruiters Can Include Individuals with Disabilities

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Why Should Businesses Care?

1) Legislation

- a) The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- b) Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act

2) It is good business

- a) Increase retention and decrease absenteeism
- b) Increased creativity and productivity
- c) Tax incentives
- d) Increase your bottom line



How to Reach People with Disabilities

- Marketing and Recruitment Strategies
 - Feature people with disabilities
 - Use inclusive language
 - Have accessible media and materials
 - Connect with community partners
 - Attend career fairs that target individuals with disabilities

Expanding the Applicant Pool By Expanding the Application

- Application Considerations
 - Offer more than one way to apply
 - Allow different formats of resumes

The application can encourage or discourage people from applying.

Showcasing Skills in the Interview

- Practices good for all candidates
 - Break up questions
 - Rephrase questions
 - Adjust to best suit applicants' communication style
 - Allow a job coach to attend the interview
 - Working interview

- Business Perspectives

VCU's Center on Transition Innovations-
centerontransition.org

VCU's Rehabilitation, Research, and Training
Center- vcurrtec.org

Resources

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– www.centerontransition.org
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