

# MAKING

DISCOVERING OPPORTUNITIES

# WORK

BY BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

# WORK



MONTAGE  
SUPPORT SERVICES

*Live your dream.*

A Comprehensive  
Person-Centred Resource and Navigation  
Tool towards Employment



Developed and presented by  
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# ***Introduction***

The intention of the **MAKING WORK WORK** guide is to be a comprehensive reference tool for professionals who specifically support adults with developmental disabilities to navigate towards and to maintain work that matters.

This, and the next, generation of youth with disabilities are placing employment as a priority, which means that they will be accessing all types of employment services. As a network of employment navigators, it is vital that our capacity to serve all people is increased.

This is an exciting time for us, as advocates, to make an impact on the many work environments that are now realizing the value and the transformation that can take place at work when adults with disabilities are recognized as contributors.

Concepts like *Making Work Work*, help to challenge the existing perception of WHO a 'diverse' workforce includes and WHAT employable means.

More and more compelling statistics are being made available that demonstrate what we already know; Given the opportunity, people of all abilities can realize their passions and goals to effectively use their talents and innate 'gifts' that make a difference not only in their own lives, but in the lives of others.

For many adults with a developmental disability, the concept of classroom training does not coincide with their perception of what work is. In reality, the best learning happens in a real work environment when the tasks and skills needed to complete the job are relevant to *who* the person is.

'Making Work Work' combines a person-centred approach with a customized employment model that leads to identifying opportunities within a business, and then connecting the employer to a person whose skills and interests can fill that need. An intentional matching process enhances the experience for both the job seeker and their fellow employees; the rate of success and sustainability increases greatly.

By applying Customized Employment with the best practices of person centred planning, you will gain confidence in your abilities to discover and guide people through a process that will navigate towards opportunities that highlight *what* they have to offer. By being an 'agent of change' yourself, the employers and co-workers who watch you in action will be encouraged and inspired by what they see.

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Work plays a major role in how we identify ourselves, and the people we support are no different. How validating and liberating it is to have an answer to the simple yet universal question that comes up in less than the first two minutes of meeting someone...”Sooooooooooooooooo what do YOU do?”

Those reading this will inevitably find some overlaps between a job developer (one who works directly with employers to determine their needs and to fill a position with an appropriate candidate) with that of a job coach who is generally placed on site with a person to assist in learning the job specific tasks, rules expectations and culture of a specific setting.

In an ideal situation the job developer would work autonomously from the job coach, but given the reality of limited people resources, often agencies find that there is an overlap in roles. This resource will provide an overview of how to blend the two roles together so you can have a general capacity and understanding of each.

The approach that **MAKINNG WORK WORK** strives towards is one in which we help the employer identify someone already on staff who has demonstrated or has could develop the capacity to be a mentor in the training process. There is much more value in learning a task from a peer than a fade in fade out traditional job coach. We provide the employer (and employees) who will be in direct contact with the newly hired person, the information and support strategies they will need in order to get the best out of the person. Sustainability in a job is much higher when there is on-going support that comes from within the work place itself.

### **Whose ‘GOAL’ is it ANYWAY?**

For many of the adults we support, identity through employment is often placed on them by family tradition and cultural work ethic. Often goals are set for individuals *by* others with good intentions and may not match the true goals and passions that motivate the individual. What motivates us may not be what motivates them. The desire to simply be part of a work force and to contribute may outweigh the usual motivation of a pay cheque. By placing someone in a ‘job’ just because it is there, is a sure set-up for failure.

Our job is to listen to and to discover the ‘gift’ of each person that we work with. Where will they find joy in their work? What do they have to offer, and how can the essence of who they are be translated into an environment that will not only benefit them, but that will also play a role in changing the culture of work to one that is welcoming and inclusive to all?

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# *The More You Know*

The relationship begins and ends with the person you are supporting. In order to begin, there is a considerable amount of time that needs to be dedicated to developing a profile with feedback from those who are closest to them. If you know the person already, you are at an advantage, but collecting a variety of perspectives will help you find the fit that truly is a reflection of *who* the person is, and *how* they will be able to contribute and participate in a successful work experience.

The profile package is meant to be two-fold. Whenever possible, get as much input directly from the person's perspective as you can. It is after all, their job and their goals. The value in getting information from family, friends or other support people, about their 'experience' of the person, helps to balance and to set a tone for how things will move forward.

The first layer of information gathering should be done in a more casual conversation setting, and will allow time to explore and get to know what the person hopes for and where they would like to be. It is important to include 'dreams' in the process. Often there are parts of the dream that can be realized and used as a very real starting block.

The second layer of the information gathering includes the functional and the employment 'overview' forms. The detailed information is broken down into specific categories that will help build the profile and assist you in the future search process.

Collecting the insights from other people, who know the participant, will help to measure and establish the best employment scenario. More often than not, an 'interview' style of just 'filling' in the form won't be effective. Collect information and clues through *conversation and observation*.

This documentation is for your use only. The information you share with employers should only pertain to the job at hand. Personal details are private and should be respected as outlined in the current privacy laws. Release forms for information should be accessed to get the worker's permission to discuss pertinent factors and signed by them or their decision maker. If employers and co-workers have general questions about the condition, (not the person) you should be able to direct them to appropriate resources.

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# ***E**mployment Background Basics*

*It is important to be aware that much of this information will be provided by other sources. Permission must be given and only information pertaining to support at the specific job should be included*

**Identified Job Interests:** What are some interests that have come up either in a formal planning session or through casual conversation? Have any interests been observed that could translate to a work opportunity? What activities are the individual drawn to that might provide clues?

Include a list of past jobs (paid or other) that the prospect enjoyed or disliked. Indicate what worked and what didn't. Did they have a choice in the 'placement' or was it part of a training program?

**Appropriate Hours:** This is a key to success. What time frames are they looking for and what are the best times regarding productivity and focus? This is not just a simple question of availability.

**Physical Strength and Endurance:** Do they prefer to work straight through a work shift? Do they need breaks and how long should lunch be? Is the goal to work a full day? Should limitations be imposed depending on ability level?

**Challenging Behaviours:** Are there behaviours (triggers) that people need to be aware of? What approaches to intervention work best? What does NOT work? How can the environment be modified? What do the employer and co-workers need to know in order to support him/her?

**"Gifts" and Attributes:** What is at the heart of this person? What can he/she bring to the work environment? What characteristics define the person? i.e.: Welcoming, sense of humour, brings people together, or likes to help people.

**Motivated, Reliable, Dependable:** How have these been shown in the past as indicators of successes, challenges and inappropriate matches?

**Support System:** Who are the key people that can help move things forward? Identify who they will be and what level of support they can realistically commit to.

**Long Range Goals:** What are the long range goals that have been identified through the Person Directed Planning Process with regards to employment and or volunteering opportunities?

## **EMPLOYMENT BACKGROUND BASICS**

*To be completed with input from peers, professionals, family, friends – Ideally people who have varied experiences of the job seeker*

<b>Identified Job Interests</b>				
<b>Appropriate Hours of Employment – Indicate times that do NOT work due to appointments etc.</b>				
<b>Is the person MOTIVATED, RELIABLE and DEPENDABLE- How has this been shown in the past</b>				
<b>Challenging 'Behaviours' ( REACTIONS)–Triggers' and how to support the person</b>				
<b>"Gifts" – Attributes</b>				
<b>Past Work Performance</b>				
<b>Current Weekly Schedule</b>				
<b>MONDAY</b>	<b>TUESDAY</b>	<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	<b>THURSDAY</b>	<b>FRIDAY</b>
<b>Support System – Who is the primary person to communicate with?</b>				
<b>Long Range Goals – Completely independent – Somewhat independent – Will always require support</b>				

<i>Any specific support needed around medication during work?</i>	<i>Any specific supports needed in crowds?</i>
<i>Any specific supports needed around washroom assistance?</i>	<i>Any specific supports needed around meals?</i>
<i>Any specific supports needed on transit?</i>	<i>Any specific supports needed in social gatherings?</i>
<i>Any specific supports needed around money?</i>	<i>Any specific supports needed around children or animals?</i>
<i>Any specific situations to avoid?</i>	<i>Other specific support needs?</i>

**NOTES:**

**PLEASE ENSURE ALL ABOVE FIELDS ARE FILLED IN – IF SOMETHING DOES NOT APPLY, INDICATE N/A**



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# *The Functional Overview*

***It is important to remember that not all of this information will come directly from the individual. Permission must be given and only information pertaining to support at the specific job should be included. (In sections that don't apply indicate with an N/A so you know that they were not missed)***

**Family Information:** Brief outline of parents, siblings, relationship with them and the degree to which they are involved in planning and decision making.

**Living Situation:** Does he/she live at home with family, alone, in a group home or with roommates? What is the level of support they need at home? What activities/chores are they involved with? What is the environment like – quiet, noisy, activity level? What are some interests at home that could indicate an interest in a work environment? Are they social at home or do they keep to themselves?

**Medical:** This should include: medications that may be taken during the context of a work shift- self medicate or with someone (trained in administering meds) allergies, feeding tube, mental health issues. Will the medical issues affect absenteeism from work?

**Diet Restrictions:** Are there allergies (environmental or food etc.) that co-workers should be aware of? Does he/she need help with making healthy food choices?

**Communication style:** Is she/he verbal? What is the comprehension capacity? Do they use assistive devices like board maker picture exchange or other? What is the language preference or other languages spoken? What are the receptive and expressive language skills?

**Ability to make choices:** Can he /she make YES or NO choices? Can they decide between 2 or more options? Do they understand consequences of choice?

**Sensory:** What are the levels of hearing, seeing and touch? Are there areas of sensitivity that need to be considered?

**Physical:** Describe any physical limitations. What areas do they need support in? i.e.: meals, toileting, and hygiene. Include mobility, use of arms, fine motor skills etc.

**Spatial:** Ability to navigate new spaces – Does he/she understand directives like RIGHT, LEFT, UP, DOWN, STOP, GO?

**Learning Style:** Has he or she had previous schooling? What is their level of literacy/numeracy? Do they have computer skills? What approach works best for teaching new skills?

**Social Skills/Interactions:** Is there comprehension of personal space and boundaries? Do they prefer groups or 1:1? Are they comfortable meeting new people? Are they shy or outgoing?

**Financial:** Does he/she manage their spending money? Is the participant accessing funding- ODSP/PASSPORT/EI Do they have someone who reports income as necessary? Are there restrictions or agreements to how much they can spend on snacks etc. while at work?

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## **FUNCTIONAL Overview**

*To be completed with input from family and professional reports where appropriate*

Family Information	Sensory Tolerance/Intolerance
Living Situation	Physical Abilities (limitations)
Medical	Spatial Orientation
Diet Restrictions or Concerns	Learning Style
Communication Style (Including Language)	Social Skills and Interactions
Ability to make Choices/ Understand Consequences	Financial

# *Getting to Know.....Diego*



**Diego** is a 28 year old man who is relatively quiet and pensive, but his kind eyes and gentle smile win people over as soon as they meet him. He likes to help people and especially likes to be told that he did a good job.

He likes to be around small groups and was really well liked in his sports activities when he was growing up. He watches a lot of wrestling on TV and likes reality hunting shows.

Diego does live with his family, which is not an ideal situation. The environment can be very hostile with an alcoholic father and overwhelmed mother. He and his siblings have been in a series of foster homes as well as other supportive living situations. He does have an

edge to his temper and will have occasional outbursts. He has worked with social workers and accessed anger management classes. When he is made aware of how his aggression makes others feel unsafe and when he is encouraged to take space, he is often able to calm down and re-focus. He also is guarded of his personal space and does not like people sitting/standing too close to him.

He was once suspended from his maintenance job for an aggressive outburst in a public space but was able to return the next day.

The family income is modest. He usually has spending money with him that is given to him weekly for coffees and lunches. He does sometimes prefer to spend it on comics.

Diego has diabetes and needs regular insulin shots. His parents are not always consistent in giving him the shots, which has resulted in a series of hospital stays.

Diego is very soft spoken in his broken English/Spanish and he is often hard to understand. He will repeat what he says, if asked to do so, but will drop words. He does not read but responds well to photos or picture symbols that help him at home with some of his routine tasks.

He can get a bit neglectful when it comes to personal hygiene and sometimes will not shave or he will wear the same clothes for days at a time.

Diego likes to work. He likes building things and working with tools. He can be very focussed on the same task for long periods of time and likes to see his finished result

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## *Getting To Know....Sandra*



**Sandra** is 20 and has just moved into a house with two other young women and rotating staff. She enjoys living with other people and is very social.

Before moving in, she lived with her parents and is their youngest child. They moved because of her father's work and she does not see them very often. With the exception of seasonal holidays, her parents often cancel visits at the last minute. When this happens, Sandra will withdraw from activities and eating for a few days. She talks to her older sister once a week on the phone but does not see her often.

Sandra has a brain injury from birth which causes occasional absence seizures. Following one, she is often tired and disoriented. She asks that people who witness the seizures, remind her where she is, and that she has had a seizure and to stay with her until she has regained composure. Sandra carries an information sheet with her about epilepsy which she shares with people who will be spending time with her.

Sandra has a physio three times a week at 7am so she prefers to sleep in on other days and takes a while to get started in the morning. She prefers afternoons and seems to get an energy burst later in the day.

Sandra uses a wheelchair. She has become really good at moving around tight spaces. Although she can move around, she does get tired easily and usually has a friend or staff with her. She is able to transfer from her chair to couch or arm chair (or toilet) the seat adjusts to varied heights and tilts. She has a tray that attaches to the arms that has a raised edge. She has limited use of her left hand. She likes to use her phone or i-pad to text friends and uses a number of social media sites.

Sandra is verbal although she does speak quite slowly with a good volume. She gets upset if someone finishes her sentences.

She likes to make people feel welcome. Sandra has had a few jobs in the past. She participated in the Yearbook club at school and volunteered at a community run at the registration desk. Sandra has difficulty with jobs that have too many steps, and prefers to do a repeat task that requires focus.

She likes the idea of working where she will meet people and be busy. She likes the idea of a paycheck and also manages her own trust fund that she got from her Uncle.

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# *Getting To Know....Justin*



**Justin** is a 33 year old man who has an endless amount of energy. He is not shy and he likes to talk to people to find out every detail of their lives. He can be a bit persistent. He does not have a huge vocabulary and uses his few words repeatedly to get his point across, usually in the form of a question.

Justin is a smaller framed man but is really quite strong. He has some bone structure damage which limits his ability to make consistent strides when he walks. This sometimes leads to balance issues.

His vision is average although he does move his head side to side as he focusses on things.

He lives in a large apartment with three other men. The house is very active and there is always music playing and the TV is often on at the same time. Justin 'reads' the newspaper every day, and will tap on stories that he wants you to talk about.

Justin is responsible for his own laundry and his room, as well as helping to cook dinner twice a week. He likes following recipes. He prefers to sit at the counter when he is using knives. Justin is a great host and gets people laughing.

He has lived at the apartment the longest and his roommates tease him and call him bossy. His repeated questions can press buttons which on occasion can lead to some reactions. Staff is easily able to re-direct him when this happens, simply by saying "Moving on Justin..."

Justin is an only child. His father and step- mother live close by. His father is attentive but the teasing is sometimes of a childish nature, he will wind Justin up and then get annoyed. His mother comes to visit quite often and is more age appropriate with her son and drills the staff for details, updates and progress reports.

He has had a few long term job placements and he has been most successful in environments where he can be social. He still calls Jane, his old manager every year on her Birthday June 12. He likes getting paid, but has no money skills training. He is on ODSP. He likes to work full time which means there are regular adjustments required for monthly reporting.

He needs strong supervisors and co-workers who can remind him to get back to work after periods of socializing. He takes direction well and likes to do things for himself once he is confident.

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# *Information Gathering Etiquette*

When gathering information from the prospective worker, there are many subtleties and intricacies that must be considered in each and every conversation.

There is nothing more off putting than someone sitting with a pen and pad, sitting across from you and taking notes: making no eye contact and simply nodding their head. The person-centred tools act as a check list and information is collected in a very interactive way. Be mindful of when you need to be writing vs actively listening.

The primary aim of this initial discovery process is to collect information directly from the person through observation and conversation in an organic a process as possible.

The intent of the tool is to get an indication directly from the person about how their own perspective balances with the experience and observations of family members, teachers, professionals and social connections whose experience of the person may be quite different.

There is sensitivity and trust building in this early stage that will set the tone for how things progress.

At all times the person has control over who knows what about them. To be clear, the information is meant to act as a starting block for determining directions to move forward in, as well as areas and environments to avoid.

Do not expect to get all the information at the initial meeting. The document will get filled appropriately in time and not all slots may have pertinent information required for the particular person you are supporting.

Each person has the right to add or edit information that will be shared with employers. The Employment Function and Assessment tool is retained as part of the persons file and can only be shared with their (or guardian's) signed approval.

# Participant Perspective

NAME:

**My**  **WORK**  **VOLUNTEER**  **BOTH**

**Highlights of Personal History (Attach Resume if appropriate)**

Have you ever had a job before? YES  NO   
 What were some of your favorite jobs and what did you like about them?

**Have you ever participated in a work training program or Other DAY program? YES  NO**   
**What was the name of the program?**

What did you learn (or what activities did you do)?

What work placements did you try (or what were your favourite activities)?

What did you find most helpful? What would you have changed?

**List some things that you do well. What are your talents? How do you like to spend your time?**

**Which of these describe YOU? ( Tick all that apply)**

I like to keep busy during the day		I like to move around at work	
I learn new things quickly		I like to learn things about other people	
I can use a computer		I like being in busy places	
I have a mobile phone		I don't like being told what to do	
I can read instructions		I am ready to start my day when I get up	
I like pictures to describe tasks		I need time to get going in the morning	
I like to ask questions		I have the most energy in the MORNING	
I like talking while I work		AFTERNOON	
I like to hear music while I work		EVENING	
I like to do one part of a task over and over		It is ok when someone tells me I made a mistake	
I like to do more than one thing at work		I can focus on things for a long time	
I am a good listener		I need to take a few breaks during the day	
I like being told when I did a good job		I want to work close to home	
I like when people know my name		I like to know what I am supposed to do	
I like working alone		I like to have new things to do all the time	
I like to work in groups		I like to finish things I start	
I like to work with one other person		I like projects that take a while to do	
I like to stay in one spot while I work		I don't mind having to travel to get to work	

**Community and Connections – Day Programs, Church, Clubs**

Who do you know that could help in your search, or where in your community could/would you like to work? Think of places you hang out or are already known.

**Work Interests**

List the type of jobs YOU are interested in...

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

**When would you like to work?**

I would like to work:

½ day morning or afternoon  1 full day to start  2-3 times a week   
Same place all the time

SETTING	CONDITIONS	SUPERVISION	TYPE OF TASK	PACE	NOISE	
Casual						Indoors
Business	Outdoors	Moderate	Some variety	Medium	Medium	
Other	Either	Frequent check in	Lots of variety	Slow	High	

**Travel**

I would prefer to work close to home

I do not mind having to travel to work

I use TTC/Wheeltrans  I travel on my own  I travel with someone



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**HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOURSELF IN THESE WAYS?**

I AM....

I LOVE...

I HATE...

I WISH...

***What do you want people that you might work with to know about you?***

**Completed by:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date Completed On:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Job Seeker:** \_\_\_\_\_ **With help from:** \_\_\_\_\_

# WEBBING CHART

*Who do we (I) know who can help?*

NAME	HOW DO WE KNOW THEM?	THEIR JOB/ TYPE OF WORK	CONTACT INFORMATION
			E-mail: Phone:
			E-mail: Phone:
			E-mail: Phone:
			E-mail: Phone:
			E-mail: Phone:
			E-mail: Phone:
			E-mail: Phone:
			E-mail: Phone:
			E-mail: Phone:

Personal/Family Business/Community Inventory Network			
Name of Business	Frequency used and nature of connection	Contact name: Phone: Email:	Who made contact: Date: Next Steps
		Contact name: Phone: Email:	Who made contact: Date: Next Steps
		Contact name: Phone: Email:	Who made contact: Date: Next Steps
		Contact name: Phone: Email:	Who made contact: Date: Next Steps

# My Places of Belonging



Places where I am a customer

A large, hand-drawn cloud-shaped outline with a scalloped border, intended for writing.

Places where I feel good

A large, hand-drawn cloud-shaped outline with a scalloped border, identical to the one above, intended for writing.

Places where I am a member

Places where connections can be strengthened

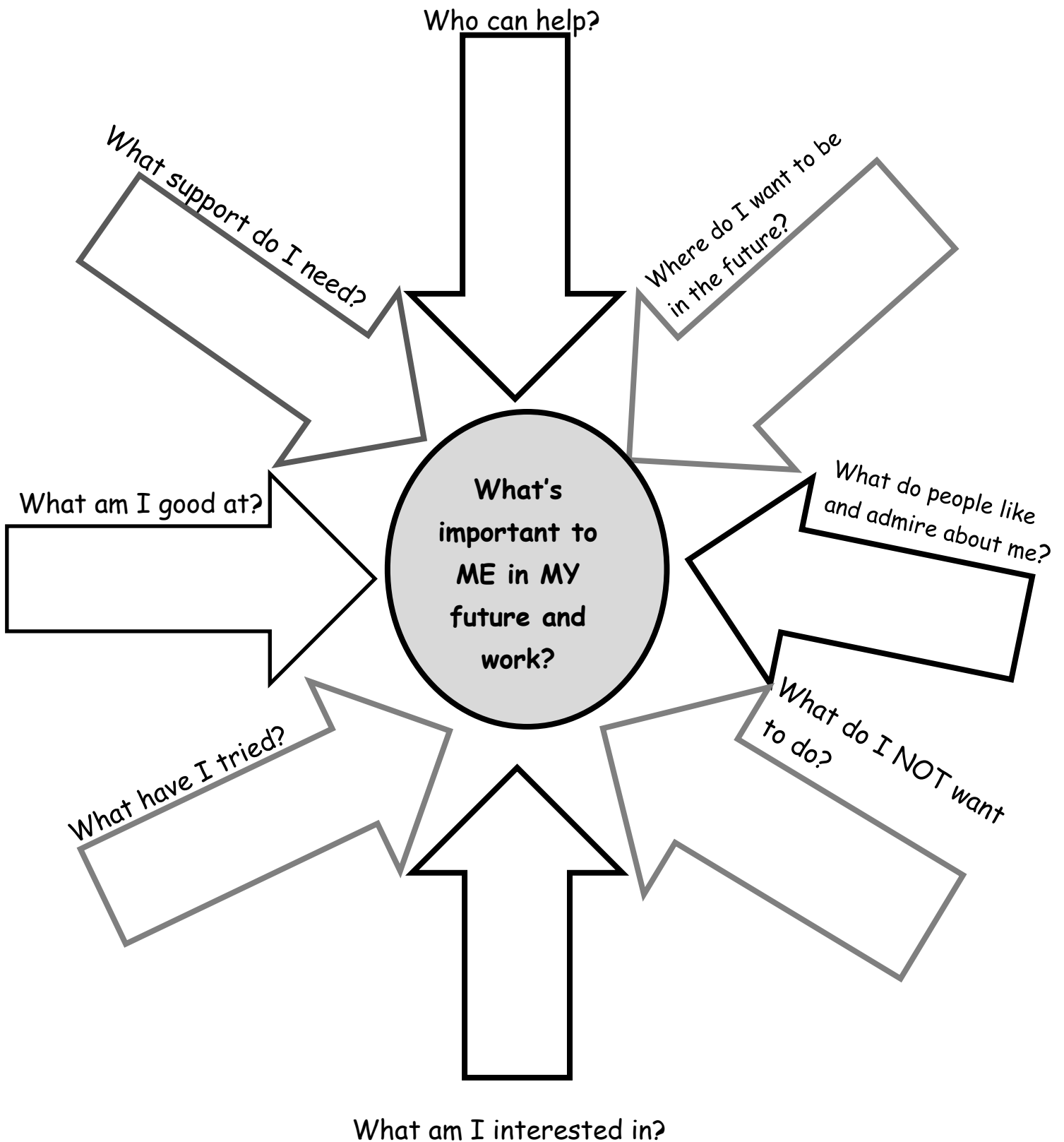
Places where new connections can be made

**PERFECT WEEK**

	Mornings	Afternoons	Evenings
Mon			
Tues			
Wed			
Thurs			
Fri			
Sat			
Sun			

**What is YOUR idea of a PERFECT WEEK? – Don't forget to include time for rest, family, work and leisure**

Thinking about what's important to me in the future around work



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# *The One Page Profile*

**NAME:** Write the name of the person as THEY like to be called. You can put nickname single quotes Penelope 'Penny' Smith or put it in the important to me box.

## **PHOTO -**

Clear and current head shot – helpful as an introductory tool

## **What people like and admire about me..**

This section is the positive characteristics, qualities and talents that the person has.

It is NOT a list of accomplishments and awards. It is a reflection of what other people value and appreciate about the person. Use strong definite statements, and not 'usually' or 'sometimes'.

## **What is Important to me...**

This is a bullet list of what really matters to the person from their perspective (even if others do not agree). It is detailed and specific. This section needs to have enough detail so that someone who does not know the person can understand who they are. It is not a list of likes and dislikes, it reflects who and what is most important to the person.

The detail is crucial – it should not be a list of one word bullets like 'having fun' and instead have the detail explanation of what that means to the person, for example, " I enjoy the social part of working and time to sit and relax with people over lunch or coffee." It should not include 'regularly' as this means different things to different people. Instead be specific about how often – daily, weekly, or monthly?

It could include: WHO, in a work setting, is important to the person, their role and why the connection is important

Important information about the best rhythm and pace of work and any important routines are key parts of this document.

## **How to support me well...**

This is a bullet list of what people need to either know or do. It is not a list of general hints. It is specific enough that if you were suddenly in a position to support the person, you would know the most important things to do. It can include both what is helpful and what is not. Again, the detail is important, so that people would know exactly what good support looks like, rather than a list of short phrases.

For example, instead of 'clear directions', it is more helpful to explain how that looks or what it means to that person – "I work best when directions are written out or told to me in sequence."

# Grace Hilston

## My ONE PAGE PROFILE



### WHAT OTHER PEOPLE LIKE AND ADMIRE ABOUT ME:

*People say that they are impressed by how hard I work and that I always finish what I start. I am also very tidy, and I even know how to fold fitted sheets! My friends describe me as a faithful friend: I never miss important dates like Birthdays. I like to learn things about people and I remember everything. My neighbours let me look after their dog if they go away. They say I am responsible and that they trust me.*

### WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO ME?

*It is really important to me that I am busy and that I help people. My family always gets together for dinner on Sunday and I want to have stories to share about my week. I usually call my sister Maddie every Tuesday. I like to use my phone to find out bus schedules. I don't like to be late. I like to be included in planning parties so I can make my grandmother's famous cookies. I want people to like me so I want to find out about them and when their Birthday is. I keep a note of all the special days on my phone calendar.*

### HOW TO SUPPORT ME WELL:

I use a walker to get around with. I need to be reminded to put the brakes on when I am sitting on it. I collect stuff so my basket is often filled with newspapers.

When I am walking I need to be reminded to focus on where I am going. I get distracted easily and sometimes fall when I am not paying attention.

I do like to joke around and have a really hard time knowing when to stop and that gets me in trouble. I laugh too loud and can't stop so it gets people mad. It is ok to joke with me, but don't let me get too silly. It really helps me to focus again if you remind me to use a quiet voice and to say 'Let's get back to what we were doing'.

It helps me to have a digital clock nearby, so I can see it and know when my break starts so I don't have to keep asking staff.

It also helps me to have work ready for me when I arrive in the morning and to keep busy all day. I get frustrated when I have nothing to do. I hope I will do a good job and work here a long time.

At staff celebrations or shared meal, please help me with healthy portions. I sometimes take too much and will get sick. (High risk of choking)

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# ***Résumés and Interviews:***

Résumé can be a very intimidating word, especially when the people we work often have little or no work experience to draw from. Providing a one page profile of a job seeker is an innovative tool to get them considered as a prospect. When you are making a 'pitch' to a potential employer, you still have the opportunity to highlight specific attributes that a worker can bring to the job, as well as skills and interests that they have demonstrated in other areas of their life that will be an asset to the job and work environment.

Involve the participant in every aspect of the search so they can see their past successes. The process may also help you to see what type of things to avoid.

If the employer wants to conduct an 'interview' it is important to prepare the prospect worker with some informal/ environmental specific questions with them that ask about themselves and some about the workplace. Participants may not be at their best when meeting new people.

During the meet and greet, the employment navigator, should be modelling appropriate interactions and ensuring that the individual is included in the conversation. There may have to be a discussion about *how* an interview is carried out i.e.: the person may do better if they know questions in advance, interview over the phone or be interviewed while performing a task. This would be considered an 'accommodation' requirement.

## **Interviewing People with Autism or Developmental Disabilities**

**Each person's level of understanding varies; having a working knowledge of these principles will help you adapt to each person's way of giving and receiving information.**

- Avoid multi layered questions – keep one theme / issue per question.
- Be patient. You may be tempted to finish a person's sentences or 'fill in' words but this does not help. Maintain natural eye contact, listen, and wait patiently until the person has finished speaking.
- Be a good listener. Let the speaker know, by what you say and do, that you are listening. Try to actively convey a relaxed and accepting attitude as any obvious discomfort that you show will only increase the discomfort of the person.
- If you are not sure how to respond, ask the speaker – but always do this in a way that leaves the speaker in control. This might involve asking an open question such as, "Is there anything I can do to make this easier for you".
- Try to empower the person by offering a choice rather than imposing your solution. Always give the person the opportunity to speak for him/her self.



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## **Stress and anxiety leading up to an interview**

Be aware that people with autism and other disabilities find changes in routine very difficult to handle. They will certainly be stressed if their routines are disturbed by, for example, being taken to a new environment. Even planned events, such as coffee with a friend, may be very stressful for them. Some people with autism are hypersensitive to noise and light, while others are fearful of crowds. They often have difficulty in waiting their turn or understanding social conventions such as waiting. Someone may not be able to tolerate such an experience, their anxiety leading them to become agitated or disruptive. If their anxiety increases they may even lash out. If someone is in this type of situation, any accuracy in responding to questions may be affected.

## **Guidelines for the interview process (Gathering information)**

The following tips will also help you during the interview itself. Keeping the environment as calm as possible. Interviewing in a large space will not reveal the best of the person.

- The individual may be more relaxed if they are interviewed in a familiar place, with a familiar person present.
- If known, explain how long the interview is likely to last and what will happen at the end of the session. Time lines and routine are very important to people with Down syndrome
- Reduce background noises which could be a distraction during the interview.
- Some adults may have an attachment to a particular object, such as a piece of clothing, or a fidget spinner. They may wish to hold the object or possibly twiddle or flap with it during the Interview. This sometimes this helps them to concentrate, and removing the object may cause the person unnecessary distress.

## **Conducting the interview**

- Talk calmly in your natural voice, keeping language as simple and clear as possible. Use only necessary words.
- Try not to exaggerate your facial expression or tone of voice as this can be misunderstood.
- Keep gestures to a minimum, as they may be a distraction. If gestures are necessary, Explain what the gestures means.
- Use the person's name at the start of each question so that they know they are being addressed.
- Lead the person into the language you are about to use, preparing them for the instructions or questions that might follow. For example, "John, I am going to ask you a question."

- 
- Give time for the person to respond; don't assume that silence means there is no answer.
  - Avoid open questions: closed questions are more likely to be understood. For example, asking a person with autism to "tell me what you like" may be too vague. The person may not be able to gauge exactly what you are asking. A better approach would be to say "Tell me what you do to have fun."
  - People with autism have a very literal understanding of language. Avoid using irony or sarcasm.
  - Use of visual aids as often as possible. People with autism are much more visual. So descriptive questions are helpful i.e.: You are working in a grocery store and a customer asks you, Where is the milk? ... What would you do? Instead of... Tell me about customer service.

### **Interviewee response**

- Allow the person extra thinking time to respond to each question. People with an ASD often take longer to process information. If there is no response at all, try rephrasing the question. A person with a developmental disability is often not able to inform you when they don't understand what you have asked: be prepared to prompt the individual in order to gather relevant information.
- **People with autism may have better expressive language skills than receptive language skills. Be aware that they may not comprehend fully what is said to them. Some people with ASD have echolalia: they may echo and repeat the words of others without understanding the meaning of those words. Words are often taken literally**
- Don't expect continuous eye contact during the interview.

### **Rejection:**

Help participants understand that the first place they look at might not be the place where they end up working. Both the participant and the prospect have the right to say no thank you. Keep the possibilities open. There may be another time when the fit with someone else might be ideal.

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# ***E**xploring the Work Space*

The Job Developer, Employment Specialists and Job Coach bring varied perspectives. In many situations, 'people' resources may be limited, resulting in an overlap of roles, many of the existing models overlap roles. Being attentive at all times is a capacity shared by all three.

As an employment engagement specialist, you already have the skill of assessing a work environment which is second nature to you when you are out in the community, whether intentionally looking for prospects or simply coming across opportunities that look promising.

A site assessment can provide a good initial impression as to the feasibility of a prospect. Even before approaching the employer for an opportunity, you want to have a basic knowledge of the space, potential obstacles and creative ways to develop job opportunities and to tactfully identify jobs that might not be originally evident to the employer.

Once the worker is hired and on site, you have the added chance to frequently scope out other areas and tasks that could further develop skills and/or fill other job opportunities.

## **BREAKING DOWN THE SPACE:**

What are your first impressions of the working environment as a whole? Do you see one available task or many depending on the spaces?

Are there specific work stations?

Is it a wide open space or separate rooms? What is going on in each area? How many people are in each section?

Within the tasks going on, how many steps or what are the sequences that make up the task from start to completion?

Consider the environment of the work space in relation to the worker. Keep in mind noise level, accessibility to the washrooms, location of the lunch room, narrow hallways, distractions, etc.

Make clear written notes about what you observe.

Using a food store as an example, you would break down the space as follows:

*Type of business:* Large busy store in a mall

*Work areas:* cash, bagging, in-store, parking lot, stocking shelves, stock room etc.

*Jobs:* For each department what are the types of jobs being performed?

*Tasks:* For each job what are the tasks and what are the steps involved for each?

*Environment:* consider working conditions – indoor, outdoor, tools required, safety measures etc.

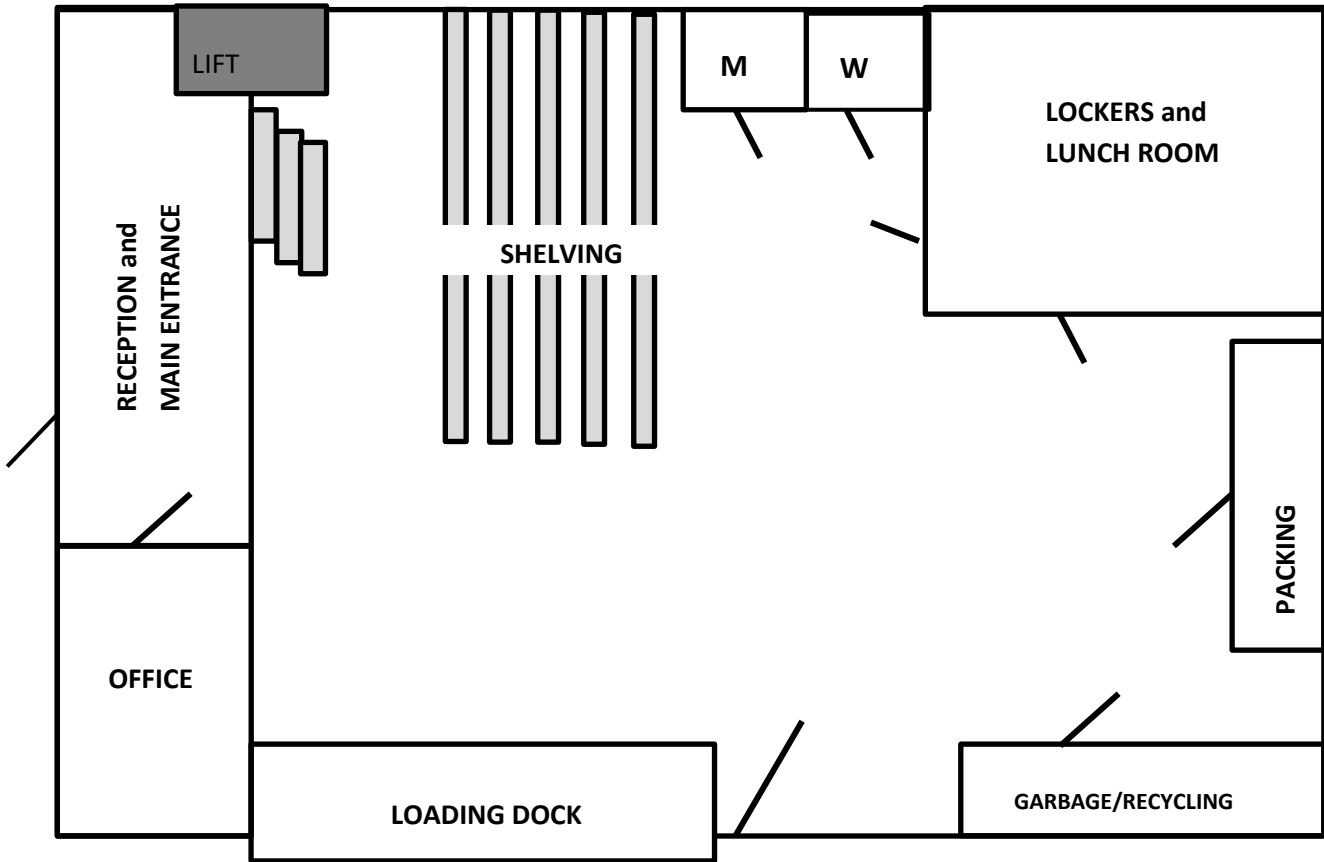
Taking all these into consideration will assist the process of task development and finding the most effective work space.

# Jobsite Overview

Location/Business Name

<b>AREA/DEPARTMENT:</b>	<b>AREA/DEPARTMENT:</b>
ACTIVITIES:	ACTIVITIES:
<b>AREA/DEPARTMENT:</b>	<b>AREA/DEPARTMENT:</b>
ACTIVITIES:	ACTIVITIES:
<b>AREA/DEPARTMENT:</b>	<b>AREA/DEPARTMENT:</b>
ACTIVITIES:	ACTIVITIES:

# WAREHOUSE WORKSHEET

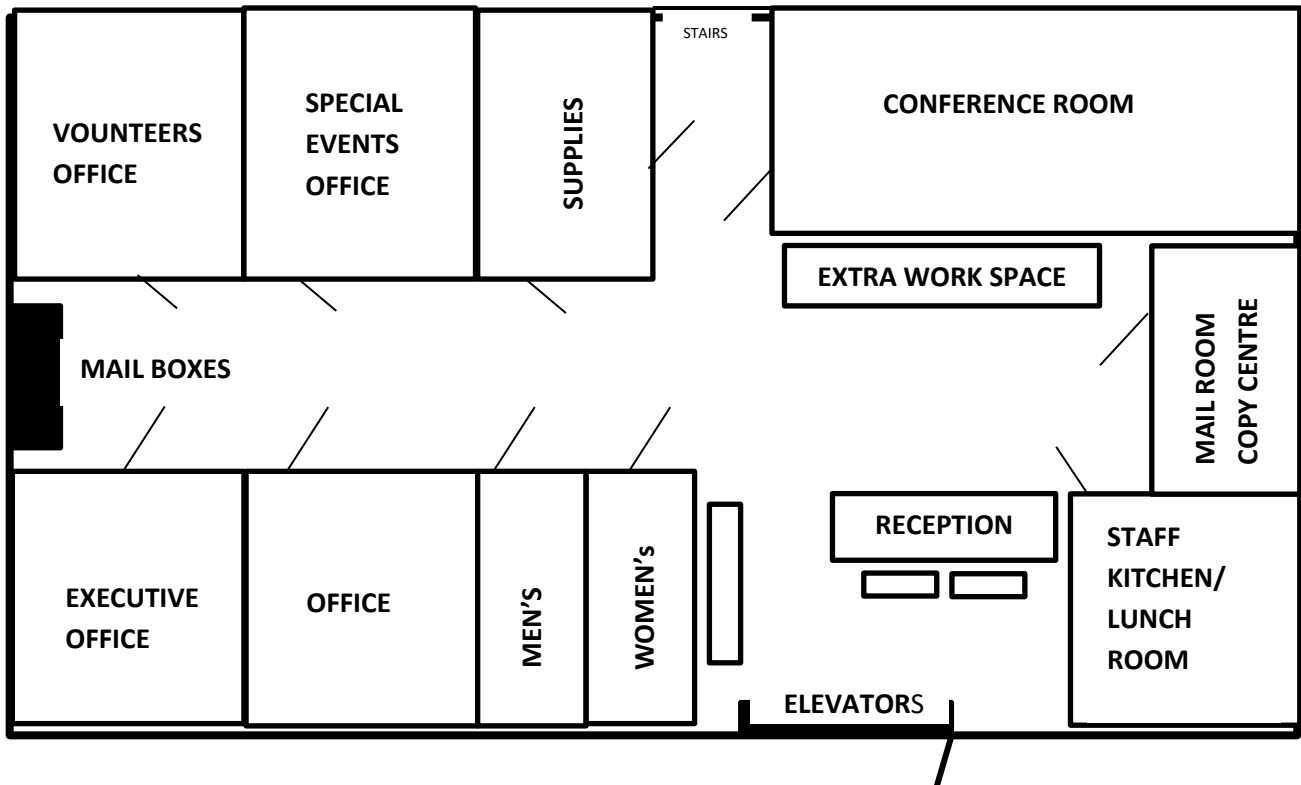


## Overview:

This is a distribution centre for a BIG BOX chain store. Work areas include receiving, packaging, quality control and maintenance. There are a variety of activities going on at any time and the workspace is very open concept. It is in a new building, so it is well maintained with accessible spaces. There is a step down from the offices and main reception area, but a lift has been installed. It is key-operated and the key often goes missing. There is an accessible door by the back loading dock.

Staff is mostly made up of immigrants from Colombia and El Salvador. They work very hard for long hours and get quite loud and boisterous at times

## OFFICE SPACE

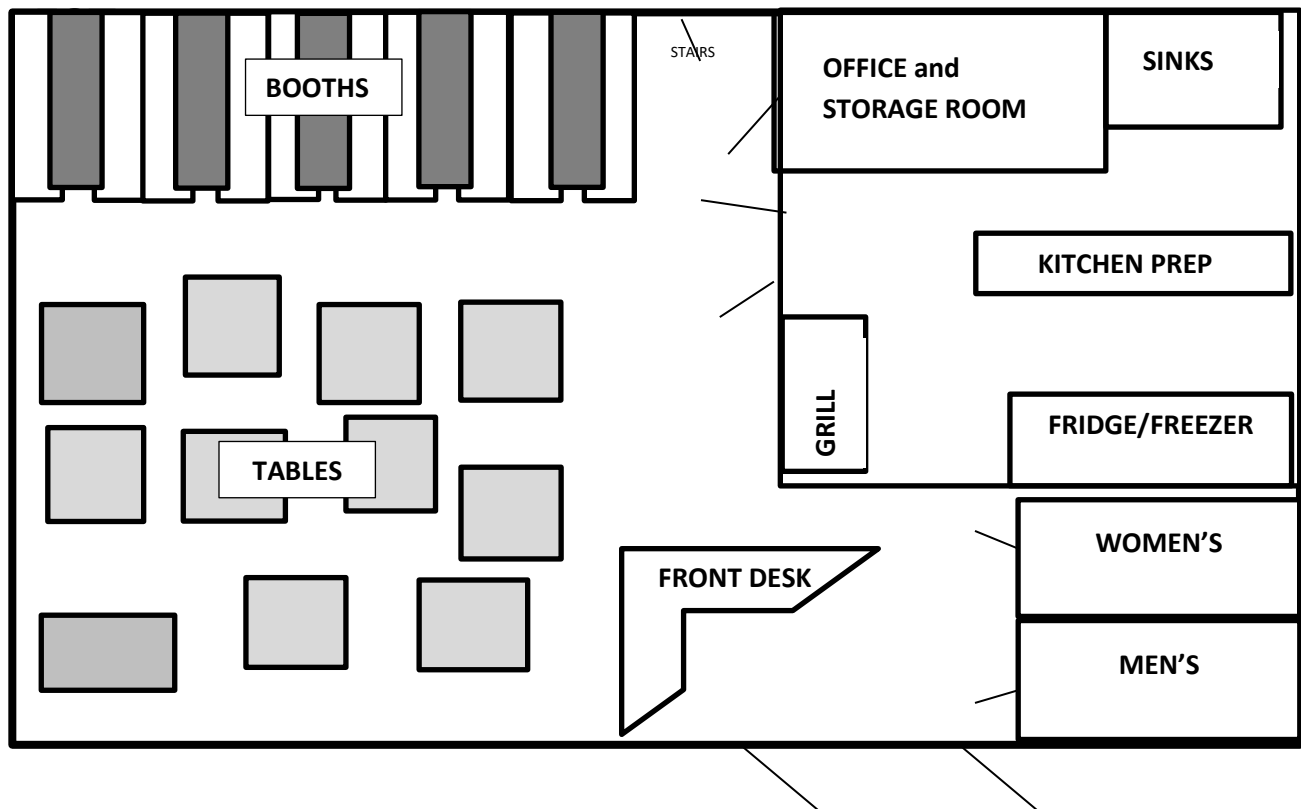


### Overview:

This is a non-profit agency located on the second floor of a busy office tower. There is 7 full time staff. The office areas are quiet, but the reception and meeting room space is often busy with outside guests coming in for small and large meetings each day. The agency provides resource materials at information fairs and conferences at a national level, and holds three to four large events each year.

Resources are constantly being updated with new reports and promotional material. Donations, mail and deliveries come to the front desk.

## RESTAURANT SPACE



### Overview:

The restaurant is small and can get quite congested at times. There are a few booths and the tables are small so they can be moved around to accommodate larger groups. The kitchen is spacious with designated work areas. The customers are often regulars and they know the staff well. It is a very social environment especially first thing in the morning. The wait staff stays within the service area and kitchen staff passes orders through a window. The floor in the kitchen and storage area is painted and can easily get slippery. The office space is cramped and storage is a problem with things often being stacked up in an un-safe manner. Lighting in the restaurant is bright but the older lights in the back often flicker.

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# ***Making the Space Work***

In many situations, you may have to make some creative judgements with regards to the set-up of the work station, the immediate surroundings or even adapting the 'tools' required for the task.

This will be determined by the spatial capacity of the person, obstacles within the work area and any pertinent physical limitations. The employer or supervisor should always be involved in the conversation so others can be made aware of the changes and how they might be affected by the changes.

Sometimes you may need to adapt the work environment to meet the needs or training/learning style of the participant.

Questions you might want to have answers for:

- Hearing ability
- Seeing ability
- Left or right handed
- Ability to tell time
- Ability to read/ write
- Attention span
- Sense of direction
- Sense of 'space'
- Motor skills

What are the aspects of the environment that have to be addressed to assist in the success of the task? Perhaps the individual is easily distracted. Does the seating direction have to be changed? Does the worker get focussed on things that may detract from the work at hand? Is their working space too close or tempting to the kitchen or vending machine etc.?

If there are physical limitations, such as the limited use of one arm, you will need to adjust the work space using a ledge or guards so things don't fall off.

There may also be a need to modify existing tools or supplies. A larger grip or extended handle will assist those with shaky hands or fine motor skills or a simple elastic band secured on a stack of cue cards will assist someone who is visually impaired to centre labels on an envelope.

In the event that you see a necessity to alter existing tools in a more significant manner, be sure that they can be returned to their original form if they are shared with other employees



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# ***Developing the Task***

Once you have checked out the work environment and have a good idea of the specific work areas and activities within them (that the employer has defined-often with your input), you will be able to determine the most effective way to complete the task that considers the person's capacity to perform them.

If you have scoped out the work place on your own, prior to approaching the employer, you should come prepared with a list of potential tasks/jobs that you envision the worker being able to participate in that match the initial needs that were outlined by the employer. Be mindful in assessing the other staff and roles. This will give you the opportunity to establish a presence as a 'known' commodity yourself. Any chance you get, take the opportunity to talk to employees, ask questions and watch what is going on. The intent is to have the employer experience and envision how hiring a person with a disability will impact the work force and environment in a positive way.

As the Employer is giving you a tour and is presenting roles and tasks to you, make notes as to whether that job is doable (or can be adapted in order to complete it Listen carefully to what needs are being identified. This will help you ensure that you present the right candidate to fill the position. Negotiating task management (how the finished result will be attained) will come later through task analysis (see pages 30-32). By breaking down the task into the various components, you will get a better understanding as to which combination of the training approaches will be most appropriate to get results...

Having said that, one of the key areas that a job coach should always have in mind is what else can the worker do? The job coach should constantly assess the environment. What jobs are being done by other staff that are taking away from their time and limiting their productivity in other aspects of their role that the worker could add to their task list? What are extensions of the worker's job that can add to their own skills development and contribution to the work place?

Documentation through the early stages of training is a vital reference tool for the job coach and others who may be in a supporting role. The skills assessment form can give a good indication of learning curve as well as a means to create a track record of successes (or challenges) as new work opportunities come up.

Remember the Employer/Supervisor will have a clear expectation of what the task is and the accepted method of achieving the end result. Be respectful of this. The task sequence already in place, gives you a starting block to build from and adapt as required.

# Learning Styles Questionnaire

Before training someone else, it is helpful to be aware of what your own learning style is. This short questionnaire will help you as you observe the characteristics of the adults you are supporting and will provide some insights as to the training techniques that will be most effective.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Check the items below that are true for you. Check as many or as few that apply.

1. \_\_\_ it is easier for me to remember names than faces.
2. \_\_\_ I create pictures in my mind to remember names.
3. \_\_\_ I remember events better than names and faces.
4. \_\_\_ I buy clothes for comfort more than appearance.
5. \_\_\_ I buy clothes for appearance more than comfort.
6. \_\_\_ I prefer to stop and ask for directions when finding my way in a new place.
7. \_\_\_ I prefer reading a map when finding my way in a new place.
8. \_\_\_ I like physically active games.
9. \_\_\_ I enjoy crossword puzzles.
10. \_\_\_ I remember a postal code or phone number by saying it aloud.
11. \_\_\_ I use my free time for physical activities.
12. \_\_\_ I prefer newspaper over radio for keeping up with news and current events.
13. \_\_\_ I prefer radio over newspaper for keeping up with news and current events.
14. \_\_\_ I spend a lot of my free time on arts, crafts, model-making, or mechanics.
15. \_\_\_ I like reading and writing games like scrabble or crossword puzzles.
16. \_\_\_ I prefer talking and listening games.
17. \_\_\_ I'm quick in learning a new physical skill.
18. \_\_\_ I'm an enthusiastic book reader.
19. \_\_\_ I enjoy talking on the phone in my free time.
20. \_\_\_ I prefer spoken directions when learning a new task.
21. \_\_\_ I follow written recipes easily when cooking.
22. \_\_\_ I tend to doodle and draw.
23. \_\_\_ I'm an outdoor person.
24. \_\_\_ I like to keep written records of things, such as a diary, journal, log book, etc.
25. \_\_\_ I like to build, construct, and fix things.
26. \_\_\_ I prefer listening to a CD over reading the same material.
27. \_\_\_ When bored, I hum, sing, or engage others in conversation

**Now count up your responses:**

How many of the *visual* items did you check? \_\_\_\_\_

(Numbers 2, 5, 7, 9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 24)

How many of the *auditory* items did you check? \_\_\_\_\_

(Numbers 1, 6, 10, 11, 13, 16, 19, 20, 26, 27)

How many of the *kinesthetic* items did you check? \_\_\_\_\_

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# ***What Is Your Dominant Learning Style***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Learning styles are simply different ways of understanding. Most learners use a combination of *visual*, *auditory*, and *kinesthetic* ways of receiving information. However, one or more of these styles is usually dominant. This dominant style defines the best way for a person to learn new information. This style may not always be the same for all tasks. Learners may prefer one style of learning for one task, and a combination of others for another task.

## **Visual learners**

Visual learners learn best by seeing. They may need to see body language and facial expression to fully understand the sequence of a task. They tend to prefer to see things close up and to avoid visual barriers. They may think in pictures and learn best from visual displays including: diagrams, illustrated picture symbols, videos/DVDs, charts and colour coding. During a conversation, visual learners often prefer to observe the task a few times in order to absorb the information. Visual learners are easily distracted by other activities going on around them, so focussing on one thing at a time is important for retention.

## **Auditory learners**

Auditory learners learn best through listening—stories, discussions, talking things through and listening to what others have to say. Auditory learners focus in on tone of voice, pitch, speed and other aspects of verbal interactions. Written information may have little meaning until it is heard. These learners prefer to sit where they can hear, but may not pay attention to what is happening right in front of them. They may hum or talk to themselves or others when bored. Auditory learners often benefit from reading text aloud as a way of retaining information and directives.

## **Kinesthetic/Tactile learners**

Kinesthetic learners learn best through moving, doing and touching. They prefer a hands-on approach, actively exploring the physical world around them, and enjoy activities such as cooking, construction, and art. They communicate by touching and appreciate physical encouragement from others (such as a pat on the back). Kinesthetic learners remember what was done, but may have difficulty recalling what was said or seen. They may find it hard to sit still for long periods and may become distracted by their need for activity and exploration. Kinesthetic learners often need to take frequent breaks and may tinker or move around when bored. They may benefit from sitting near the door or someplace that allows them to easily get up and move around.

# Learning log

Date	What was the task?	Who was there?	What did they learn about what worked well?	What did they learn about what worked well?

What does this mean we need to keep doing or do differently?

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# ***T**rainning Techniques*

Each person has their own way of learning. Some learn by reading, some by watching then copying, others like to hear directions while some refuse any direction and want to figure it out alone.

Adults with disabilities are used to having many different people work with them for personal care, daily routines, choice making and other tasks. What happens over time is that *they* actually become the teacher. By following their lead and by being attentive to their reaction and response, we can get a better indication as to which approach will be most effective in the work environment. Input from family or resident support workers is valuable to see what approaches have worked in other situations.

At all times, directives should be respectful and discrete. The goal of the training technique is for the worker to gain a better understanding of the task and if possible to reach a point of independence. Techniques can be modified and combined as long as the end result is the same.

In many cases the employer or supervisor may be showing BOTH of you the task requirements at the beginning. Listen to the directions and repeat back to the 'trainer' remembering to include the worker in this conversation. Model so the instructions are directed towards the worker.

**Demonstrating (D)** is the approach that we all know best. Make sure that the sight lines to what you are doing are very clear. If you are working with a visually impaired person, try to be in a place where there are limited sound distractions. Speak clearly and slowly as you mimic what the steps to the task are. Break the task down into manageable pieces and have the worker copy. If there is a breakdown in the sequencing, let them repeat the steps that were correct, re-do the missed step as you explain what you are doing, have them copy and the carry on. By watching the worker repeat steps, you can get an indication if this will be enough information or if another approach will have to be introduced.

**Verbal Prompts (VP)** provides basic steps for each task and are broken down and delivered slowly, clearly and with an even voice. This is a good approach for someone who is a fairly quick learner and who has the capacity to remember things. Depending on the number of steps to a specific task, you can decrease or increase portions of the directive. Tone is very important. A repetitive approach can become 'parental' and you

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should be mindful that it does not turn into a *do this, do that* scenario. Often a combination of verbal instructions leading to non-verbal gestures can work to alleviate the potential of this happening as well as to promote more independence by fazing them out all together when possible.

**Verbal Prompts as Questions (VPQ)** allow the worker to process what they need to do next. Once they seem to understand what the task involves, they still may get stuck. By asking them “ what comes next?” or “Where do you put that?” The job coach can step back and let the worker make the next move. If a step is missed or a mistake is made, let the worker repeat the task up to the point where they get mixed up, ‘show’ the missed step or ask the appropriate question and then let them follow-through.

**Body Language (BL)** is very subtle and is the least invasive form of direction. Once the worker is comfortable with performing the task, the job coach can direct from farther away with gestures like raising a hand signaling right or left, pointing, eye contact and facial expressions when appropriate can also be encouraging or a red flag.

**Hand over Hand or Partnering (HHP)** engages both the worker and the job coach in the task. For this type of training the coach may be required to physically assist the motions to follow through with the task. The worker may have limited use of one arm or less finger movement, may need wheelchair assistance or help moving things. Treat the task as you would with anyone else, explaining all the steps using gestures and prompts. The important thing to focus on is that you are doing the task *with* the worker, not *for* the worker.

**Hand over Hand Motion (HHM)** teaches the flow of a task and is used briefly to emphasize a movement like swiping a cloth across a table or up and down movements with a window cleaner. If the task is repetitive like tapping something, the gentle touch hand over hand provides guidance as the rhythm is set.

**Cueing (C)** is helpful when a worker gets ‘stuck’ in a task. The coach uses a verbal cue Like ‘next’ or “ok that’s done” and may also accompany it with a tap or a quick physical re-direct. The worker knows the task but just needs an indicator to continue. This may include a silent sign or gesture that gives the so far so good message but that they need to continue.

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**Symbols or Coding (SC)** works well when the worker is challenged by literacy, numeracy or sequencing. The most used version of symbol/coding is by colour. Obvious indicators like GREEN for go or RED for stop are effective. Labelling with symbols helps to show a progression of steps – like using a microwave oven. It is important that any symbols used are age appropriate and do not in any way single out the worker. Once the sequence is learned, aim to remove the symbols or colour codes.

**Check Lists and Pictures** are excellent resources when designed properly. Check lists with or without symbols, will assist the worker in gathering supplies that may be required for a specific task or to put the steps in order. This can also be a fade out tool as comfort level increases. Pictures are also very effective for illustrating sequences of an activity or how something should look at the end of a task i.e.: how a meeting room should look when all the cleaning and/or set up has been done. If photographs are being used, make sure that they are clear and are task focussed. Any background people (unless pertinent to the job) can easily be miss-interpreted.  
Note: On-line instructional videos are readily available and with today's technology it is easy to make a video or photo sequence of the person actually performing the task

**Shadowing** is used once the worker has reached a good comprehension of the task. The job coach is still within reach of the worker and is ready to jump in with a physical, verbal or active prompt to re-direct but at this stage the worker is taking the lead.

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# ***Building Relationships***

**INTRODUCTIONS:** Meeting new people can be scary for anyone, especially in a new working environment. You may be supporting a worker who is excited about finding out who's who, and making their presence known, or you might have someone who is very shy and who needs more time to ease into these new working relationships. You may often find that people are different in their home surroundings than they are in a work environment. Anticipate a learning curve as the comfort level on both sides increase.

There are a few things that need to be taken into consideration as this process evolves.

The impression that you, as the 'professional', initially make, and continue to present, is at all times pivotal to the success of the worker. Do employers and co-workers see YOU as someone they want to do business with and how do you reflect back on them – You are also representing your organization.

It is helpful to know in advance how many people will be working along-side the worker. Will there be an immediate supervisor? Who from other areas of the work environment will be working along-side the worker? Are there going to be a lot of different people coming and going?

At each introduction, take the lead by modeling first. Remember in many situations, this may be a co-workers first introduction to an adult with a disability. The operative word, you will note, is 'adult'. Introduce the worker FIRST using first and last name and a little about what they will be doing. Once the other person has introduced themselves (ask what their role is (if they do not mention it), encourage the worker to use names, or titles as appropriate, each time they see that person. As the coach, it is important that you also know key names and use them accordingly. When you introduce yourself, talk briefly about the program you represent as well as what your role is with the worker. If the person asks a question about the worker to you, simply re-direct them to either ask the question again to the worker or include them in the conversation.

## ***GETTING TO KNOW ME: Follow the lead of the worker – what will WORK best?***

You *and* the worker can offer the ONE PAGE PROFILE as an on-site introductory tool that will incorporate the best ways of support (this is effective when there are behavioural issues that **key co-workers** should be aware of as well as how to re-direct etc.) If you do use this approach, use discretion as to who the key people are who *need* to have access to this sensitive information.



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**BOUNDARIES:** For people not accustomed to working along-side someone with a disability, it is not unusual for them to inadvertently use child-like voices and terms such as 'honey', 'dear', 'buddy', 'good man/woman' etc. when interacting. It is vital that WE set the tone and correct others as we see it happening. The worker should be addressed by name only in a professional manner. Hand-shakes, fist bumps and hi-fives are fine when in context. Affirming should be in an adult, quiet voice.

Depending on the work environment there may be guidelines around, where and when people interact with each other re: level and volume of voice etc. Follow the lead of what you have been told or how you observe the other people in their daily interactions with each other.

If the worker uses a wheelchair, model appropriate ways of speaking with them so new people will copy what they see. Things that are second nature to you - like crouching down or sitting at the same level of the individual and not touching the wheelchair unless invited to etc. may be very foreign to the co-workers. Be intentional as you are interacting so it is clear to other staff what is appropriate and respectful.

**TEAM BUILDING:** There will always be points of social activity within the work place. At breaks and lunch, find people to chat with, look for common points of interest that naturally build relationships. In general, people will be shy approaching the worker when they feel they don't know what to say or how to communicate. Acknowledge the awkwardness and help them reach a comfort level that works for them.

Be mindful of personal boundaries if the worker has a tendency towards revealing or asking for too much information. You are included in the conversation as well, but the primary goal is to establish the relationship with the worker and their new network.

Ensure that the worker is given the opportunity to participate in signing birthday cards, money collections for gifts, office celebrations, seasonal celebrations etc. THEY could also be the one who initiates activities like this, and who takes a role in building community within the work setting.

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# ***EVALUATING THE SUCCESS***

**EVALUATION TECHNIQUES:** As in any job situation, you want to be sure that the experience is a success for all stake-holders. Generally a three month trial is the standard. You may want to adjust this depending on the setting, the worker and any agreement that was made with the employer.

As time goes by, the worker may slip into the established evaluation process at the work location however, as a starting block, you may want to provide a template that gets feed-back from the co-workers, supervisor and the worker themselves. Forms may have to be adapted to meet the communication style of the worker.

The information you want to gather in the early stages to determine if things are going well may include the basics of:

Is the worker arriving to work on time?  
Are they completing tasks?  
Are they dressing appropriately?  
What are the relationships and interactions like with co-workers?  
Have there been any issues?

From the workers perspective you need to ask:

Do you like your new job?  
Are the people nice to you?  
Is this somewhere you'd like to stay?

**PROGRESSION AND OPPORTUNITY FOR NEW TASKS:** No one likes to be doing the same job for ever. An evaluation or check-in point gives you the opportunity to present how well the worker is doing as well as offering suggestions for increased variety in tasks based on observations you have had as you watch other activities. Suggest ways that the worker could incorporate new tasks into their time slot or progress into another role entirely.

As mentioned before, as the job coach, you are in a unique position to constantly be looking at opportunities within the work environment to add to the experience and contribution of the worker.

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**WHEN IT IS NOT WORKING:** It is just as important to acknowledge when the placement is not working. Clues will be quite obvious in this instance that may include:

- Resistance to coming to work at all
- Acting out at work
- Intentionally screwing up tasks- sabotaging, bored
- Being rude on the job or to co-workers
- Loss of interest or motivation in the task, coming to work
- Seeking ways to get into trouble

When any of these issues arise, your first course of action is to investigate what is happening and where, at home, in transit, on site, in relationships.  
Investigate possibilities like:

- Family issues – Death, Arguments
- Personal health or medical/mental issues
- Meds change
- Staff change
- Dynamics with staff, house mates, friends, co-workers

Possibilities at the work site may include:

- New supervisor
- Difficulty with a co-worker
- Not interested in the job – not what they thought it would be
- Distractions

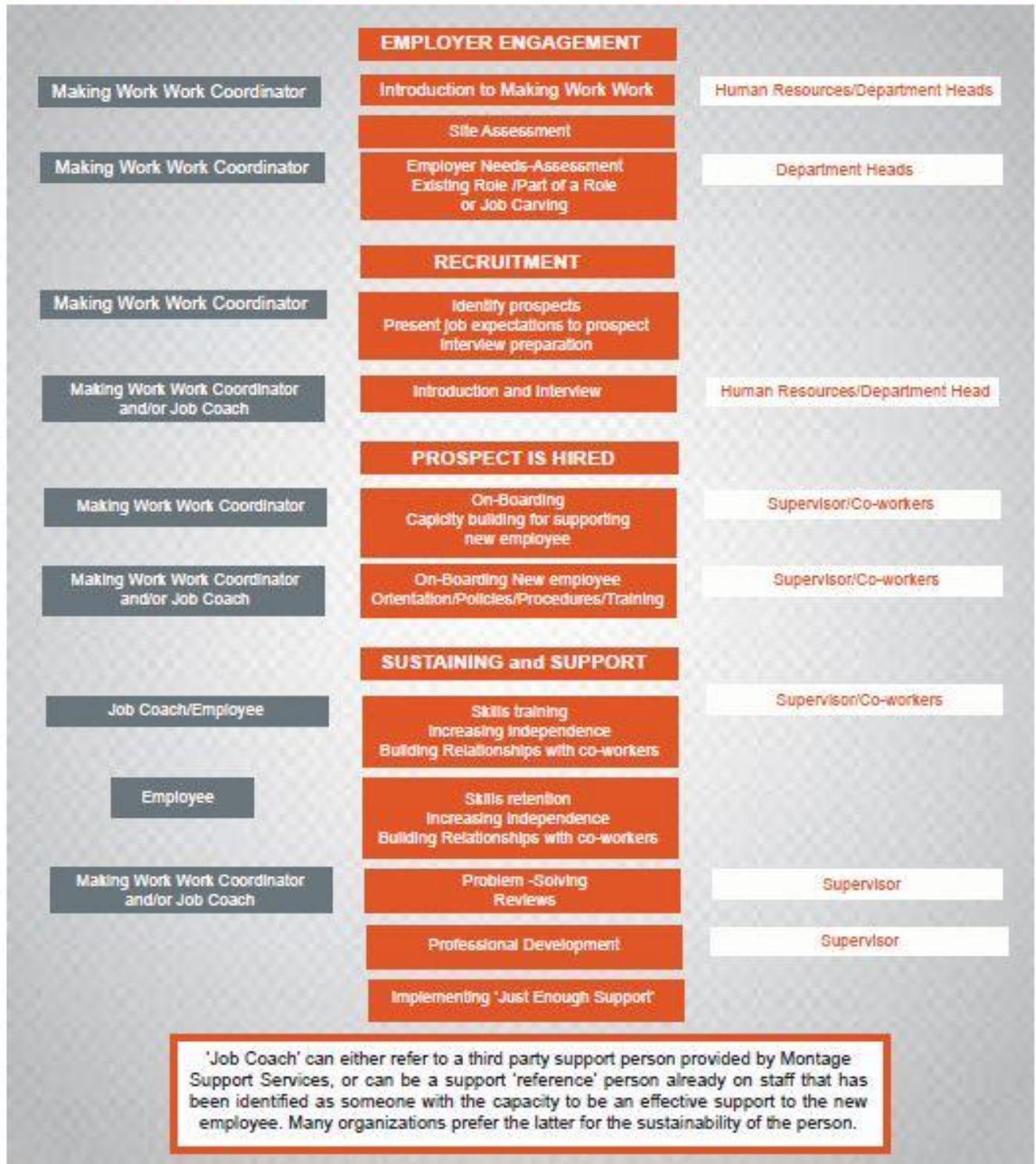
When appropriate, notify key people at work and make necessary modifications to the work environment and tasks or even the schedule so issues can be acknowledged and addressed. Spend some time away from the work site in an informal setting to gather information directly from the worker when possible.

Make yourself available to look at the concerns. LISTEN to the perspective of the employer and offer ways to address the issues so a compromise or solution can result.



# CUSTOMIZED EMPLOYMENT MODEL USING PERSON CENTRED PRACTICES

*Roles and Responsibilities of Partners in the Process*



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# ***MAKING IT WORK***

The length of a job is solely dependent on how well the worker is trained for the tasks at hand by the coach and the level of independence they have reached.

When a contribution is being made, when there is a good level of productivity and the employer sees the impact to the business, the job can be considered a success.

Communication between all the key players and worker is also paramount. This does not necessarily mean constantly dropping in. Many employers are happy to know that you are on the other end of the phone or an e-mail away. It is actually sometimes better this way so the worker can slip into the natural supports of the work place. It is important to be available as situations warrant. All emergency contact information should be made available to the sites.

***Worker responsibility:*** Workers require help to understand what is expected of them and the accountability that goes along with a job in the broader community.

As in any work experience, if requirements are not met, meetings with supervisors will be held, warnings will be given and clear repercussions will be determined. Participants often have to learn the hard way through being suspended or fired.

## **WHEN IS IT TIME TO END THE JOB?**

If a situation occurs when the arrangement is no longer working for one or both sides make sure that the leaving is done on a good note. Acknowledge the successes that did happen and the learning that came from the challenges. Maintain a professional attitude with the employer to keep the lines open for other prospects.

Sometimes the person we are supporting may no longer be interested in the job but may not have the communication skills to articulate. Your observations around shifts in interaction, decreased enthusiasm, and changes in energy or subtleties in facial or physical disengagement will indicate if this is a possibility.

Some people may actually begin to sabotage their job by intentionally making mistakes, arriving late, challenging authority, looking to blame others, etc. After investigating precursors listed previously about changes in work or at home, have a discussion away from the workplace to explore where the sabotaging is coming from and how the person could express the concerns in a more appropriate and healthier manner.

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Once you have worked through what the concerns are, you will have the opportunity to re-assess and creatively look at ways to address them.

A reality is that the job may simply have run its course. Time to step back re-group and start the process again using what both of you have learned as a team and building on it. Make sure appropriate protocols are followed once a decision to end has been determined such as appropriate notice and an official last day. Request an exit interview with the supervisor and worker to help with healthy closure of the experience. Ensure co-workers are also made aware of the decision and that there is a time to say goodbye.

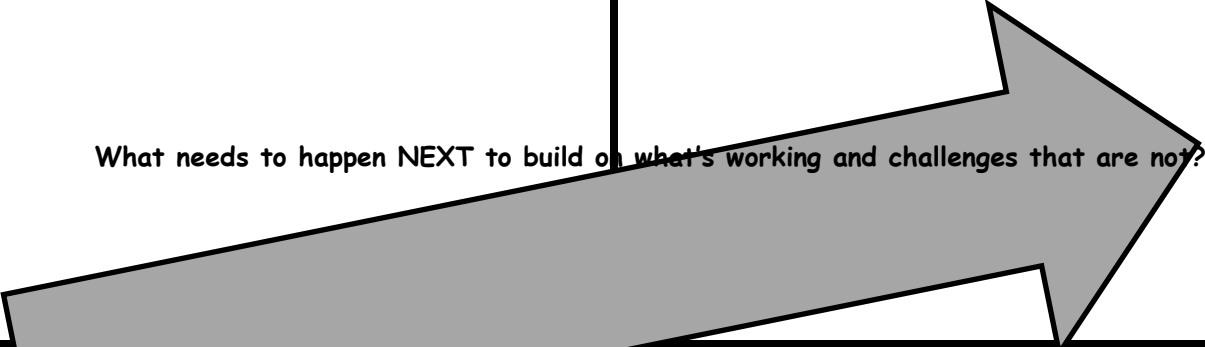
You should also arrange a time to meet with the employer to ensure that the possibility for another worker remains open for the future.

Other considerations for ending the job include:

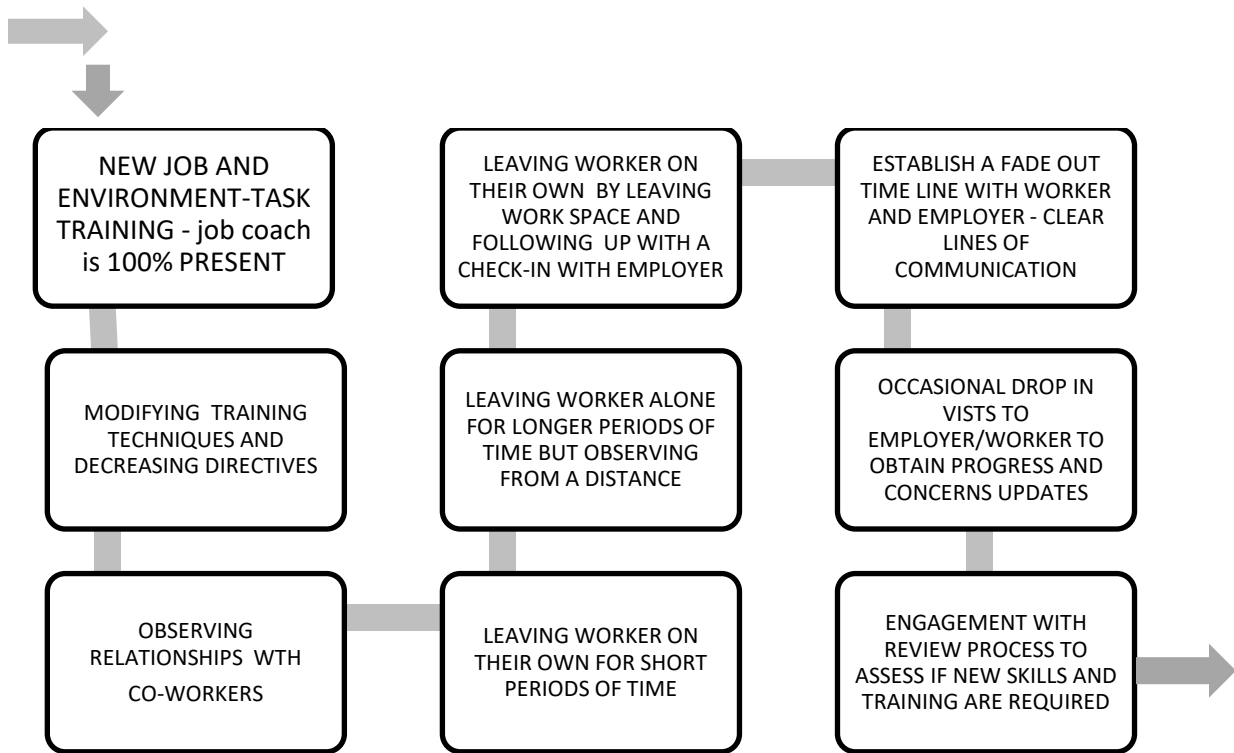
- That the person is not being accepted well by the Employer or Co-workers
- That the person has been doing the same task and is not being given advancement opportunities
- That the skills learned could be transferred to a new environment
- That the worker has indicated that they want to stop

# What's working? What's not?



What's working?	What's not working?
<p>What needs to happen NEXT to build on what's working and challenges that are not?</p> 	

# ***FADING IN AND FADING OUT***



At all times, the relationship between the employer (and their needs) and the agency is paramount. Our capacity to match them with workers who will meet those needs will determine the sustainability and likelihood of a continued working partnership

The time line of a fade in fade out process can be as short as one shift or as long and committed as the entire placement. Parameters of the exit strategy are best defined in the early discussions with the employer.

You should have an indication as to what a realistic expectation is at the onset, and it is important to be as transparent with the employer as to what is realistic and an estimate of a time line.

For the job coach whose intention is to fade out, the above chart provides a series of milestones that can be adapted for each person.

At the beginning, you are there to support the worker in not only learning the tasks but you are also there to make introductions, familiarize the worker with the environment as



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well as to establish routines and relationships. The initial phase is very intense as roles are defined and change is introduced.

During the shadowing and training phase, you and the worker are establishing the rhythm and pacing of your time there. Following their lead, you are getting an indication as to what information is being retained, how good the focus is, where things are progressing or breaking down and what adjustments need to be made re: the training strategy and or task.

As the comfort level increases, you will withdraw more and more of your assistance when you note that tasks are being completed.

At all times you need to be attentive to how the relationships are building with co-workers. It is not unusual to expect that you will need to step in to model words of dignity and effective and appropriate communication. You want to be sure that the worker feels safe, is treated with respect and is benefitting from the natural supports in place from those they are working with. An additional challenge is the personal bias that a job coach may hold in a particular situation

By leaving for short periods of time, you can gauge if the work stops, if the worker continues to be focussed, maintains appropriate break times etc. Let them know that you will be leaving for longer periods of time but will be checking in.

Establishing the parameters of your exit with the employer is very important. Be clear about how communication will progress and what supports are in place if issues arise. Ensure contact information is accurate.

### ***WHEN THE JOB COACH STAYS***

It may have been determined at the beginning of the process that the job coach will be a constant support. This means that you will be spending a significant amount of time on the job site and it is easy for boundaries to be challenged. If this is the situation there are some factors that will help ensure the success for a long term placement.

1. If there are other coaches also supporting the individual, ensure that training and support approaches are consistent for the worker.
2. Make sure that all coaches are known by the co-workers.
3. Know when it is time to take a break from each other. Working along- side the same person all the time can get intense.
4. If you are the coach, establish your own 'place' within the work team dynamics.
5. Be clear about your boundaries, you are NOT an additional staff member, stick only to the tasks the worker has been assigned BUT be willing to help as a duo as opportunities come up.

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# CONCLUSION

As a key person navigating someone to employment, you have the opportunity to build networks and to establish yourself as a resource person for furthering the mission of creating a culture of welcome and inclusion for all levels of ability at work.

Gather the impact stories from the people you meet and work alongside. Engage the employer and staff to assist in increasing work opportunities within their network.

You and the person you are working with are a success story for the local businesses and organizations that you are part of. Your employment partners will be inspired to share their part in a success story with others in the business community.

This is a shared journey that you are on with the adults we support. Equality and inclusion at work continues to be a long road with many barriers, diversions and stumbling blocks. The more people that join the journey, the smoother the road will become.

**Person-Centred Tools** included in this resource manual have been designed by Helen Sanderson and Associates <http://helensandersonassociates.co.uk/ca>

**One Page Profile**

**Perfect Week**

**Who am I – My Places?**

**Learning Log**

**What is important to me in the future around work?**

**What's working? What's not?**

## ***Additional Resources and Reading***

DTG- EMP – ***Working Knowledge*** articles by Allen Anderson [www.dtg-emp.com](http://www.dtg-emp.com)

SenseAbility [www.senseability.ca](http://www.senseability.ca)

Autism Ontario [www.autismontario.com](http://www.autismontario.com)

Epilepsy Ontario [www.epilepsyontario.org](http://www.epilepsyontario.org)

Video Clip – Steve Tempas Job Coaching Strategies and Attainment 2003

*Different not Less Temple Graydon, 2012*

# ADDITIONAL INSIGHTS

## Creating a Culture of Welcome and Inclusion for People with Developmental Disabilities in the Work Place

### Practice Abilities Awareness

- Understand and support Developmental Disabilities and the key principles of engagement in work related desires, ambitions and advancement.
- Create work environment partnerships through education and engagement including an internal support network that involves information sharing workshops and best practice policy guide lines.

### Disabilities Competent Organizations

- A diverse 'looking' staff does not necessarily indicate a 'mental health' educated staff
- Disabilities/mental health educated employers accept and acknowledge that the needs of the worker are often determined by other people's goals, racial, cultural, communication styles, economic background, limited access to education and socio-economic backgrounds
- Without creating a new culture of welcome to and inclusion of developmental disability and mental health in the work place, adults with these barriers will not be able to reach their full potential
- Disabilities/Mental Health competent work environments include;
  - HR policy development around employee education
  - Ongoing commitment to provision of disability appropriate service
  - Integration of best practices into all areas of the work environment
  - Creating educational opportunities through accessing professionals in the field of Developmental Services

### Role of Management in Disabilities/Mental Health Awareness

#### Executive Level:

- Measure the starting point of disabilities and mental health awareness within the work environment
- Ensure staff have an understanding of the needs of the individuals that they may be working along-side
- Ensure that the organization is promoting themselves within the broader community as an entity that supports and can educate others about the value they have experienced through the disabilities and mental health awareness they instill in staff at all levels
- Ensure that new employees are offered information training as part of their orientation



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### **Communication:**

- Communication styles will vary within the disabilities and/P.W.L.E population. Use and make available the most appropriate technology, tools or an interpreter to appropriately convey pertinent work related information to the individual
- Create opportunities where the individual (and support person where appropriate) can demonstrate the need-to knows of communication as it relates to the context of work and tasks

### **Training:**

- Acknowledge that this may be the first experience, for the majority of your staff, to be 'knowingly' working along- side adults with a developmental or mental health issue - Set them up for success
- Focus training on developing listening and communication skills that are most appropriate for each individual
- Create informal situations where the individual can clearly communicate about what others need to know to support them well in the work place
- Staff working in direct contact may require more extensive training

### **Human Resource:**

- Are up to date<sup>3</sup> with current AODA (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act) best practices for employment <http://www.aoda.ca/>
- Has an understanding of the existing perception of developmental disability within the culture of the work environment and the areas of challenge that need to be addressed

### **Organizational Visioning:**

- Policies, procedures and vision statements should consider and include Disabilities Competence with appropriate resources, monitoring and deliverables

## **Furthering your own Disabilities Competence within the Work Environment**

1. Examine your own values, behaviours, beliefs and assumptions. Reflect on your own experience with people you know or have encountered with mental health issues or developmental disability as well as your own experience of exclusion
2. Recognize behaviours within your-self or your team that discourage inclusion
3. Engage in activities and conversations that develop your understanding of other people's life experience.
4. Familiarize your-self with physical abilities, communication styles, spatial conception, training methods that are most effective to create a 'win win' situation
5. Discover areas of commonality. 'I am different – just like you!'
6. Be open to new perspectives and approaches to reaching the same end result.
7. Be actively engaged in creating and sustaining strong relationships that further the common goal of your business
8. Recognize the shared value and importance that work plays in each person's identity

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## EMPLOYERS TIP SHEET

### **1. Focus on what you want to achieve, not how**

From the time you sit down to write a first draft of your job description, think about the essential requirements for the job and what you want your new employee to achieve. Focus on the end result rather than how they'll get there.

For instance, instead of 'minimum typing speed of X', you could say 'produce quality reports/documents'. Instead of 'excellent phone skills', you could say 'ability to establish strong customer relationships'. This will give your applicants some flexibility to show how they can help you get the business results you need.

It's also tempting to get carried away with writing an impressive and technical-sounding list of selection criteria or to specify a raft of educational requirements, in the hope of attracting skilled applicants. Consider which of these you really need and which are nice to have, and make it clear in the job description (or ideally just cut out the fluff completely).

### **2. Make your information accessible**

You're less likely to attract a wide range of applicants to your role if not everyone can access your recruitment materials.

Make sure that documents like position descriptions, application forms and questionnaires are available in accessible formats. Microsoft Word has a built-in accessibility checker to make sure that people using screen readers can understand your documents, and there is plenty of information available online about how to publish your information in an accessible way.

Consider providing alternatives to written tests, and be flexible with the way that your applicants present the essential information. Also think about whether medical or aptitude tests are essential to the job requirements before you include them.

### **3. Think ahead of the interview**

If an applicant discloses disability before the interview, ask them if they need any adjustments. Consider things like how they will find or enter the venue, and whether they require supports to be available at the interview, such as an interpreter. As with any potential employee, try to make the first meeting with your organisation professional, friendly and stress-free.

It's also worth making a commitment to give every applicant with disability an interview. This will give them a real opportunity to demonstrate their capacity to do their job, beyond what was in the scope of the written application.

At the interview, only ask questions about the person's disability if it's for legitimate and non-discriminatory purposes, for example:

- To determine whether they can perform inherent job requirements

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- To identify any reasonable adjustments that may be necessary during the recruitment process or to perform the job
  - To establish entitlements and obligations where disability may be relevant (such as superannuation, workers compensation, the use of sick leave or access to productivity-based wages).
  - Avoid questions that have negative assumptions or connotations or questions asking about the nature and origin of the disability. For instance, ask 'Will you need any changes or adjustments to the workplace in order to perform your job?' rather than 'How would your disability affect your ability to carry out the job?'

#### **4. Remember that not everyone will disclose disability**

People with disability have a choice to disclose or not, and like everyone they also have the right for their personal information to be kept private.

There is no legal obligation for an employee to disclose disability unless it affects their ability to do the tasks that must be carried out to get the job done. In some cases disability may only become evident once the person is employed.

If someone does disclose, it's important to treat them with respect and dignity and focus on the person, rather than the disability.

#### **5. Encourage a flexible workplace**

A flexible workplace allows you to think creatively and structure working lives to match individual and business needs. Having a flexible workplace will help you to attract a diverse workforce, including people with disability.

For example, an employee with disability could take medication that may have adverse effects on their work performance at particular times (that is, making them tired and lethargic). By offering flexible or part-time working hours, employees with disability can work when they are most productive. This will allow them to access the same working opportunities as other employees.

#### **6. Make adjustments to the workplace, if you need to**

If you employ a person with disability, it is important that you make any appropriate or reasonable adjustments to the work environment to accommodate them.

Most people with disability will not require any major adjustments to be made in the workplace and many will require no adjustment at all. In fact, the Australian Bureau of Statistics reported in 2012 that 10.3 per cent of employed people with disability required some type of special work arrangement such as being provided with special equipment or being allocated different duties.

People who do require adjustments will generally tell you what will be effective for them; but you may also need to ask, in a legitimate and non-discriminatory way.

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If you do need to make reasonable adjustments, this might include changes to work practices, alterations to facilities or access to specific aids or equipment—such as adjustments to work arrangements to accommodate breaks, providing an adjustable height desk for a person using a wheelchair or arranging access to a telephone typewriter (TTY) for an employee who is Deaf, has hearing loss or has difficulty with speech. You should also look at your worksite for accessibility issues or potential hazards. An accessible organisation offers equal access to things like buildings, meetings, interviews, teleconferences, websites, systems, information and learning and development resources.

## **7. Make the most of free services and financial assistance**

There are plenty of services that can help you employ and retain people with disability, and they won't cost your business anything.

The Opportunities Fund provides financial help for suitable equipment and workplace adjustments. This could include a range of things like ramps, handrails, sound reduction devices, visual and audible fire alarms, accessible technology or ergonomic and specialist equipment.

It also offers free workplace assessments to help employers and people with disability achieve an accessible workplace.

## **8. Keep an open mind**

This seems like an obvious one, but it's also very important.

Be flexible in the way that you think about skills and capacity—look beyond disability and look at what the individual brings to the workplace.

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## **Interview Tips for people with Asperger's:**

1. Preparation is the key: by this I mean; make sure you know as much as possible about the job you are applying for. Use the internet to research the company, look at company history, and read as much about the company as possible. Who are the main staff and how long have they been working for that company? What is the reputation of the company like? What have they achieved in their industry? Make sure you are as prepared as much as possible for the interview, do you know your CV inside and out. Have a list of your job experience in the relevant industries and achievements ready. (Business and personal achievements). Have a list of your personal attributes and a list of your strengths ready e.g hard working, punctual, determined team player etc. Have some examples written out in case you are asked about them. Have some examples written out or memorized of situation questions, say five or six different ones e.g. when there was a time when you dealt with a difficult customer and what action did you take and what was the outcome? Was there a time when you had to work out of your comfort zone and what steps did you take to achieve this and what was the outcome. A time when you delivered superior customer service. A time where you did something different and why? Was there a time when you exceeded your target and what did you do to achieve this? Generally situation questions work like this: 1. What happened? 2. What action did you take? And 3. What was the outcome or end result?

Have all these written out and most of them learned off by heart or memorized so that when you are asked in the interview be ready to give the answer. When listing or having to tell your potential employer about weaknesses, you are better to just say something like: 'You like to give or do your best and tend to be a bit of a perfectionist and you are working on improving varying your work with more than one task at a time throughout your work day'. Do not go on and list a whole lot of what you think are weaknesses as you probably won't get the job.

2. Practice interview role playing if possible with a trusted friend or family member. By this I mean one of you will play the interviewer and the other person the candidate going for the job. This will hopefully get you more confident with the interview process and what role you will play in it. If you absolutely hate role playing, make sure you have at least researched the job expectations and company and have some answers ready preferably on a piece of paper. It would probably pay to practice the whole interview from start to finish, so that you get to know how an interview works and what the Interviewer is looking for in an ideal candidate and also to show you how to act and respond correctly and quickly in the interview. Try not to take any criticism personally. Keep the end result that you want in mind all the time if you can.

3. Make sure you are wearing the right clothes to the interview. If the interview is for a corporate or office job, make sure you go dressed properly and you have shiny polished shoes. Also depending on what industry the job is in, go and check out the place of employment and go dressed like the staff that work there. For example if the other staff is dressed in suit and tie, then that is how you go dressed. If they are in jeans and a polo shirt and sneakers, then dress in your tidiest jeans and polo shirt and sneakers. If you are a guy make sure you have a shower, shave before the interview and a recent haircut, like a day or two before the interview. Wear deodorant and make sure your clothes are clean. If you are a girl, make sure you are dressed



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smartly and have showered and have minimal jewellery and you are wearing the right amount of make-up and not wearing any clothes that are too revealing.

**4. Look at the person you are speaking to;** I know this is hard for people with Asperger's or ASD related disorders. At least look at their forehead or bridge of their nose or mouth or the side of their forehead.

**5. Give clear and strong confident answers when possible and try and be to the point.** Try not to go on for too long. Try not to repeat yourself too much. When talking say just enough then stop and let the person interviewing talk or ask their next question.

If the person interviewing you does not answer straight away then you can in most cases continue to talk, but only if you have enough relevant points to say. If not stop talking and let the interviewer carry on with the next part of the conversation.

Another part that will be difficult for people with Asperger's and ASD is being able to read the facial expressions or body language of the person interviewing them. You may be able to get around this by giving short and to the point answers and by not repeating yourself as much as possible or not at all and giving some eye contact as explained in point number four. In a way you would be learning your answers like a script before you go in to the interview.

**6. Try to be as relaxed as possible by doing some breathing exercises and positive self-talk before entering into the potential employer's premises and the interview itself.** Relax and try to treat the interview as if it were just a conversation. In my case it took more than 2 interviews to get really good, but so long as you are improving each time and learning something from the process. Also smile and shake the person's hand and say it's good to meet you. At the end of the interview, thank them for their time and say: 'Thank you for your time, I look forward to hearing from you soon'.

**7. Disclosing or telling the interviewer about your Asperger's Syndrome.** I would say that in most cases honesty is the best policy. You are better to tell the person interviewing you as they can make allowances for your disability. A brief letter from a Psychologist or Doctor is more than adequate. So long as it explains briefly what Asperger's is and how it affects you and what allowances may need to be made and a list of your strengths because you have Asperger's Syndrome. If you decide not to disclose your Asperger's, you may end up standing out as different and still come to the attention of your employer because of Asperger's Syndrome. Your Asperger's or ASD may be too hard to camouflage and you could still have a difficult time working for and with your employer.

## **INTERVIEW DO's and DON'T's**

- *Arrive on time.* Check bus, and train schedules. Plan your route to the interview and arrive on time, or even a few minutes early. Allow extra time to arrive in case of a delay in public transportation or excessive traffic.
- *Be well groomed.* That means a clean, neat appearance, **without odor**: clean teeth, trimmed nails, and clean, combed hair. An individual can write a great cover letter and build an impressive resume, but the interview can be the key to making positive impression. You may have the best skills, be the most accomplished in your field, but **if you don't look professional and smell good, you will not be hired!**

- *Use good manners.* Greeting your prospective employer at an interview with a firm handshake, eye contact, and saying “Hi” or “Hello” is expected. Introduce yourself, even though everyone knows who you are. A smile indicates you are happy to be there and happy about potential employment at this company. Be nice to everyone you meet, including the receptionist and others who may not be your boss if you are hired, but who will be your co-workers. These people may have some input in the hiring process. Your good manners will set the tone for a positive work relationship if you are hired by the company.

### ***STAR Approach for answering interview Questions.***

**Situation or task** – Describe the situation that you were in or the task that you needed to accomplish. Describe a specific event or situation, not a generalized description of what you have done in the past. Be sure to give enough detail for the interviewer to understand. This situation came from a previous job, from a volunteer experience, or any relevant event.

**Action you took**- Describe the action you took and be sure to keep the focus on you. Even if you are discussing a group project or effort, describe YOUR part in it. Don't tell what you might do, tell what you did.

**Results you achieved** – What happened? How did the event end? What did YOU accomplish? What did you learn?

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