

Florida Provider Network



**FLORIDA DEVELOPMENTAL
DISABILITIES COUNCIL, INC.**

**USF UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH FLORIDA**

University of South Florida, Division of Applied Research and Education Support
Funded by the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council

What Can You Do? Campaign to Raise Employment Awareness

Campaign for Disability Employment Launched

The Campaign for Disability Employment (CDE) is a collaborative effort to promote positive employment outcomes for people with disabilities by encouraging employers and others to recognize the value and talent they bring to the workplace. Working to raise awareness and change attitudes, the CDE has developed a What Can YOU Do? public education effort. Its aim is to reinforce that people with disabilities want to work and that their talents and abilities positively impact businesses both financially and organizationally.

The Campaign offers a range of education and outreach tools, all designed to engage employers, people with disabilities, family and educators, and the general public. The centerpiece is a community-building Web site, <http://www.whatcanyoudocampaign.org>, which offers users the chance to learn, express their commitment to disability employment efforts and share what they "can do."

Supporting Employment Training Efforts Continue

SCIETT Project Participants Meet in Orlando before FL-APSE Conference



By Brenda Clark

SCIETT staff partnered with FL APSE's 10th Annual Conference held in Orlando last August to support a pre-conference workshop for SCIETT team members who were recruited to provide supports to their local areas in the role of trainers/facilitators. During this professional development opportunity, SCIETT staff facilitated a discussion concerning the vital roles and responsibilities of the participants during this fourth and final year of the Project.

The workshop was attended by representatives from six of the eight pilot site areas. The representatives were self-advocates who are employed, job seeking, and self-employed, direct supported employment providers, state agency staff, and the SCIETT advisory committee.

Each participant received a Resource binder designed with their name and pilot site area identification on the cover. They also received a copy of the SCIETT Poster which was presented at AAIDD Envious Lives Conference 2009, and a copy of *Take Charge of Your Job Search! A Handbook to Empower Unemployed People to Find Their Own Jobs* by Frances Curiel. An online walk through of the Florida Provider Network website an interactive communication network system was facilitated and the August issue of the Florida

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SCIETT Project Participants Meet in Orlando



Provider Network Newsletter was distributed, which can also be viewed on the Florida Provider Network website at <http://www.flprovidernetwork.org>.

Participants of the pre-conference had an opportunity to share their concerns and successes within their pilot site areas. Consultant Dale DiLeo provided technical assistance to the participants to problem-solve their common and unique concerns. SCIETT staff and Dale provided technical assistance of next steps to facilitate systems change in local communities within the roles and responsibilities of each participant. Dale also initiated the presentation of effective facilitation strategies during the session which will be continued during the next statewide train the trainer opportunity scheduled for November 17, 2009.

Three future planning dates were confirmed for distance learning participation of the train the trainers. These sessions will be facilitated by Dale to enhance the knowledge and skills of the participants as trainers of adult learners and facilitators of diverse audiences. Participants will facilitate a group collaborative effort to develop a training presentation to demonstrate their skills and knowledge during the Annual SCIETT FPN statewide professional development meeting.

Two FPN statewide professional development meeting opportunities are tentatively scheduled to provide a platform for all pilot site team members for the purpose of sharing best

practices, cutting edge strategies, challenges, concerns and issues relating to employment options for persons with development disabilities. Team members will have opportunities to address all aspects of employment from service to business perspectives. Team members also use these meetings as opportunities to showcase success from their local communities, present challenges through case study presentations, and receive technical assistance from the diverse network membership. Dale also provides intensive training and technical assistance on content that is common and recurrent as requested by team member consensus.

The first professional development opportunity is scheduled for November 19th through the use of information technology distance learning methods. The second professional development opportunity is scheduled for March 9–11, 2010. All professional development



opportunities through SCIETT are posted on the Florida Provider Network website Training Center.

For more information relating to the Project please contact Brenda Clark at the Florida Center for Inclusive Communities, College of Behavioral and Community Sciences at University of South Florida. Her email address is bclark@fmhi.usf.edu or phone 813-528-0595.



October 21 is National Disability Mentoring Day

Disability Mentoring Day is a national effort to promote career development for students and job seekers with disabilities through hands-on career exploration, on-site job shadowing, and ongoing mentoring leading to internship and employment opportunities. Hosted by the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD), DMD connects nearly 20,000 job-seekers with disabilities with thousands of employers in more than 300 locations in every U.S. State and Territory and in more than 24 countries each year.

Event dates can vary by location.

DMD Coordinators: <http://www.dmd-aapd.org/DMD/DMDforcoordinators.html>

For more information: <http://www.dmd-aapd.org/DMD/index.html>



The Employment Consultant's Relationship with Employers

By Dale DiLeo and David Hagner

With the continuing evolution of utilizing more natural supports in the workplace, it is not unusual now for employment programs to work closely with co-workers at the start of a job placement. However, there has been little research or discussion on another key figure at the work setting—the supervisor.

Some employment situations do not make a clear distinction between the role of co-workers and supervisors; but, in general, supervisors have responsibility for evaluating employee performance. Supervisors also have more authority to make workplace decisions than co-workers, and also are usually less regularly available on an hour-by-hour basis. The support supervisors offer includes:

- modifying or adapting job assignments and requirements
- approving schedule changes and time off
- giving feedback on job performance, including recognition for good performance and reprimands for mistakes
- responding to special problems or concerns
- projecting a feeling that an employee is valued and the job is secure.

Avoid Disrupting the Supervisor's Role

The most important factor for the employment consultant to remember is that the employee's supervisor should provide supervisory functions, never the employment consultant. Correspondingly, employees with disabilities should directly notify their supervisor when they have a problem.

In far too many workplaces, agency staff has taken over supervisory functions. This turns the supervisory relationship inside out and creates a situation in which the real supervisor may ask the agency staff person "How's Claire doing?" or hesitate to make a decision without checking with the agency.

At one recently visited work site, the supervisor kept an employee phone number list for her work team posted on the wall. Unfortunately, it listed a job coach's name and number instead of the supported employee's. An inside-out arrangement of this kind creates a barrier to a normative relationship and builds the employer's over-dependency on human services. Respecting lines of organizational structure helps keep "walls of disability service" from building around a supported employee.

Good Supervisors Are Already Job Coaches

How does this situation occur? Sometimes it is the result of a job developer setting up agency-provided supervision as a benefit to the employer, saying "we'll train, supervise and take care of your new worker so you won't have to worry about it." Sometimes employment consultants, in their efforts to provide on-site support, simply handle everything that comes up, just because they are there and it is the most convenient solution.

Sometimes the manager is unsure of how to interact with an employee with a disability and avoids supervising the person altogether. However, most supervisors are fairly well matched to their jobs and know how to supervise people, including those who happen to have disabilities. They know how to evaluate performance, how to deal with personnel issues and how to help people develop. Good supervisors are already "job coaches" for their subordinates.

Supervisors often obtain a great deal of job satisfaction from this side of their work. To some extent supervisors even enjoy dealing with personnel problems, especially helping an individual overcome difficulty or develop a new side of his or her personality.

Advising Supervisors on Managing Diverse Workers

If a supervisor does need some sort of assistance—and many will because of accommodations needed by a worker with a disability—employment consultants should act in the capacity of advisors.

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Relationships with Employers

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If a company has an established format and schedule for employee performance reviews, it should follow the same procedure for an employee with a disability. If an employment consultant helps establish, revise or modify a review procedure, it hopefully will benefit the entire company or department, not just one employee.

Supervisors generally are less interested in employees achieving a specified level of performance than they are in seeing progress. The meaning of job performance—whether it is improving, not its actual level—determines the feedback given by supervisors.

Supervisors need to interpret events and respond effectively. Employment consultants often can help supervisors figure out how to evaluate performance. Because you are aware of the worker and his or her capacities, personality, communication style, etc., you can provide information on what to look for and how to see progress.

When issues do occur, the employment consultant should try to assess the problem not only from the employee's perspective, but also from the perspective of the company. And not every problem has to be "solved." Sometimes your role might be one of just listening, or you might choose to provide background information for the supervisor to consider.

Direct Relationships with Supervisors Are Important to Workers with Disabilities

A personal relationship and mutual interests with one's supervisor can be important. Such nonperformance factors as personal connection, perceived similarity of values and "fit" with the organization play a large role in a supervisor's performance evaluation of the worker with a disability. Research has shown that supervisors reward employees who offer extra help and show an interest in

the supervisor's personal life with higher performance ratings.

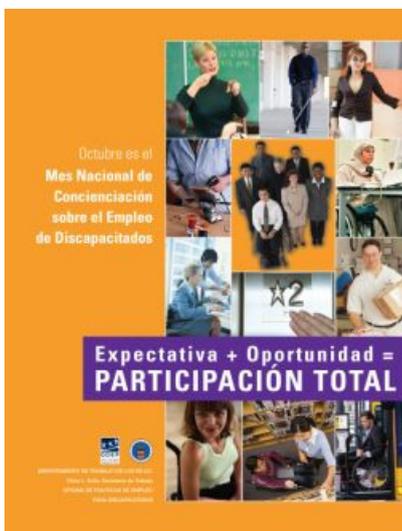
If a supervisor does not feel confident in approaching someone with a disability, it is a good idea to actively encourage the supervisor by building familiarity, providing tips for communication and suggesting how and when to approach the person. Employers also pay attention to and learn from one another. There may be occasions where an employment consultant can assist supervisors to develop networks for information sharing. One agency sponsored a monthly employer breakfast for informal sharing of ideas and experiences.

Another reason to cultivate relationships with management is that supervisors can make allowances for variations in job performance. For example, one employee was adamant about not taking orders from a substitute supervisor. He refused to work and became very angry when his usual supervisor was not on duty.

While behavioral change interventions were certainly available to help this employee change, the supervisor devised a quick and effective accommodation of her own. She gave the employee every day off that she was off. This allowed for more time to help the employee slowly build other relationships of trust with other supervisors.

While it might be better for our personal growth to learn how to deal immediately and effectively with certain situations, the reality is that avoidance can work fine for some situations, too. In this example, the individual needed the extra time to develop a relationship or risked being fired.

In cases where an employee has very extensive supervisory and support needs, it may be necessary to rethink the job design or switch to a job sharing or personal care support strategy. If even this level of ongoing support is inadequate, a poor job match may be the problem and the career planning process should be reestablished.



October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month
This year's theme for National Disability Employment Month is **Expectation + Opportunity = Full Participation**. The NDEAM 2009 poster is available in both English and Spanish, in one size, 20" x 15," at no cost.

To order: <http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/rc/odep.htm>

To download the PDF file:

<http://www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/ndeam09.pdf>



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