Strategies for Effective Supervision, Career Advancement, and Job Supports of Individuals with I/DD

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Today’s talk

1. Learn about the experiences of a researcher with IDD.
2. Learn 5 strategies employers can use to support the employment of persons with IDD, and provide examples of how they have been implemented.
3. Gain knowledge about how to identify and structure workplace supports in different types of research settings (office environment, lab, and community settings).
My experience as a researcher with disabilities

ASHLEY WOLFE
RESEARCH LIAISON, PEER MENTOR
Introduction

- I am a researcher with an intellectual and developmental disability
- I teach researchers without disabilities how to conduct more inclusive research
My job at the Institute of Community Inclusion (ICI) at Umass Boston

- Ideas about how to make employment accessible for people that have IDD & be a disability advocate

- Things that I have worked on:
  - Developed consent tools and interview protocols
  - Analyzed data and shared it with other researchers, people with IDD, and their families

- Things I learned:
  - Ways that people with IDD are protected when they participate in research
  - Different types of research
Florida Employment First Project

• **My current job responsibilities:**
  - Support self advocates in Florida
  - Work with co-workers on Employment First Grassroots Group
    - Monthly webinars and focus groups

• **Earlier in the project:**
  - Held large inclusive forums and small forums for self advocates
  - Pushed team to use conversational interview style
ICI’s Marketing and Communication Team

- My job responsibilities:
  - Make ICI publications easier to understand for people without IDD
    - Write plain language versions of publications

http://www.communityinclusion.org/article.php?article_id=313&staff_id=185
Boston University

- **Research Specialist for the Youth Panel**
  - Helped in developing Project TEAM
  - Made sure materials are easy to understand and accessible for learning
  - Developed an evaluation to learn if teens like Project TEAM trainings
    - Review and analyze data to improve Project TEAM trainings
    - Gave feedback for consent process and flyers
Peer Mentor

- I work as a peer mentor
- Relationship to the Young Adult
- Understanding the environment
- Learning the Game Plan work sheet
Train New Mentors

- Peer Mentoring Manual
- Develop a training (Pictures)
- Phone calls for comfort between the new mentors and their Mentees.
Supports

- Help me be more successful with being on the job.
- Being and feeling supported with being on the job.
- Support from other people
Attitudes and work Culture

- Believe in what I do.
- In feeling accepted.
- Positive professional social community
What Have I learned?

• What I do best from within my work place
• With my community
• Personal Experience and being as a self-advocate
• Having a really strong work ethic
Supporting Success in Research Employment: An Illustration of Young Adult Peer Mentors with DD

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- Katie Curtis, Peer mentor
- Kit Livingston, Peer mentor
Project TEAM will prepare youth with disabilities to:

- Systematically identify environmental barriers and supports,
- Generate modification strategies, and
- Request reasonable accommodations.

The long term outcome of Project TEAM is to facilitate participation in valued life situations such as education, employment, and community life.
WOULD USING THIS STRATEGY CHANGE THE ACTIVITY FOR OTHER PEOPLE?

WHAT STRATEGY CAN I USE TO CHANGE THE ENVIRONMENT?

WHO DO I TALK TO ABOUT MAKING THIS CHANGE?

WHAT PARTS OF THE ENVIRONMENT HELP ME OR MAKE IT HARD FOR ME?

AM I ABLE TO DO THIS ACTIVITY NOW?

WHAT ACTIVITY WOULD I LIKE TO DO?

PLAN

DO

GOAL

CHECK
Project TEAM Best Practices

Cognitive-Behavioral Techniques
Youths internalize a self-monitoring process “Game Plan: Goal/Plan/Do/Check” using self-talk questions.

Resulting benefits:
Shifts attributions about participation difficulties from personal impairment to the environment. Facilitates generalization of training concepts to everyday life, enabling youth to identify & resolve environmental barriers.

Universal Design for Learning
Concepts are associated with symbols and introduced using multiple modalities such as videos, games, and direct instruction.

Resulting benefits:
Learning activities can be modified and graded for optimal receipt to facilitate learning. The same content can be delivered to youth of varying ages, abilities, and life experiences.

Project TEAM: Teens making Environment and Activity Modifications
A 12-week manualized group intervention

Experiential Learning Approach
Youth master new content and gain skills through group discussion, investigative learning activities, field trips, and personal reflection.

Resulting benefits:
Youth immediately apply new concepts to real-life experiences to achieve a personal activity goal. Youth make decisions and solve problems in matters that are directly relevant to their lives, increasing self-determination.

Peer Support & Social Learning
Youth acquire new skills and insights by attending sessions and field trips with peers who share similar life experiences.

Resulting benefits:
Creates a safe environment where youth work together to identify solutions to environmental barriers, increasing self-efficacy. Youth develop meaningful relationships that expand their social networks and support participation.
Peer mentoring

**WHO:**
- Young adults with range of disabilities ages 16-34.
- Matched by interests and capacity to support each trainee’s personal activity goal.

**HOW:**
- Series of 8 phone/skype calls over 12 weeks that follow each group module.

**WHAT:**
- Application of the Game Plan to everyday life.
- Provide support and encouragement to trainees to learn new concepts and achieve goals.
Supports for Peer Mentors

- Accessible Peer-Mentoring Script
  - Weekly “theme” to facilitator formal and informal conversation.
Supports for Peer Mentors

• Accessible Peer- Mentoring Script
  ○ 8 consistent steps/ objectives across calls.
    ➢ Getting ready (Practice & Data Collection Prep)
    ➢ Introduce yourself
    ➢ Theme/ Getting to know each other
    ➢ Project TEAM Personal Activity Goals
    ➢ Reviewing content
    ➢ Practice the Game Plan (theme)
    ➢ Questions
    ➢ Reminders/ Goodbye
Supports for Peer Mentors

- Accessible Peer-Mentoring Script
  - Uses Game Plan symbols to orient mentor to content of each call.

Front page of each script

Top of each page
Supports for Peer Mentors

- Accessible Peer-Mentoring Script
  - Suggested script.
  - Suggested questions to promote engagement and understanding.

Supports Prompts:

- e) Does a person help you to do your activity outside? Who? What part of the environment is that? (answer: people)
  - Check here if I used this prompt

- f) Did you use any items or materials, like sunglasses, a hat, an umbrella, or boots, to make it easier for you to do your activity outside? What part of the environment is that? (answer: things)
  - Check here if I used this prompt

Those are great examples of (supports / barriers)!

Can you tell me how those parts of the environment help you or make it hard for you?
Supports for Peer Mentors

- **1:1 Supporters**
  - Review content and prepare for each call.
  - Assist with data collection activities.
  - Assist with related work requirements including time entry, managing schedule, etc.
Supports for Peer Mentors

- 1:1 Supporters
  - Provide support when requested during the call.
    - Ensure safety and reduce frustration for mentors and trainees.
    - No interaction with trainees.
Peer Mentoring Success

- Peer mentors obtain 8 objectives of each call at a high rate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentor</th>
<th>Overall Attainment</th>
<th>Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>67% - 93%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>93% - 100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>93% - 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>41% - 81%</td>
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Trainees (n = 12) with range of disabilities engage consistently in peer mentor calls.
Peer Mentoring Success

- Mentors who did not use supports attained fewer than expected objectives [$\chi^2 (1, N = 1018) = 116.01, p < .01$].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentor</th>
<th>Use of Supporter</th>
<th>Use of Script</th>
<th>Mentor-Initiated Script Additions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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Feasibility/ Logistics

• Personnel
  ○ Student interns or fieldwork placements serve as 1:1 supporters to reduce costs.
  ○ Modeling and weekly support from head research staff or previous peer mentors.
  ○ Weekly team meetings to ensure seamless integration of peer mentor and group intervention components.
    ▷ Peer mentors usually unable to attend these meetings.
Feasibility/ Logistics

- **Protection of Human Subjects**
  - All peer mentors are BU employees & members of the research team.
  - Complete CITI training with support
    - 1:1 support for reading and defining new concepts
    - Utilize print outs and electronic text simultaneously
    - “Search/ Find” feature in word
    - Multiple 2-3 hour sessions to complete modules
Feasibility/ Logistics

Schedule Management and Supervision

- Multiple communication methods needed during non-work days- cell phone (call & text), email
- Clear schedules with expectations- arrival & transition, practice time, bathroom breaks, etc.
- Adequate time to prepare, conduct, and de-brief after each call (>1 hour).
- Peer mentors get paid even when trainee doesn’t attend call.
In Summary

- Young adults with DD can be effective members of a research team with adequate supports:
  - Personnel
    - Support for both research-specific tasks and general employment skills
  - Accessible materials
Effective supervision and career advancement of individuals with IDD

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What we know about people with IDD and work

- People with intellectual or developmental disabilities (IDD) want to work in the community.
- People with IDD value (a) earning money, (b) being productive, (c) the admiration of others, and (d) the quality of social relationships.
- People with IDD want to do meaningful work, demonstrate their skills and talents, choose their own careers, and have the same opportunities for career advancement as people without disabilities.
How effective supervision can support these goals

- Strategies for Effective Supervision and Career Advancement for People with IDD
- Tips for career advancement for people with IDD
Strategy 1: Clear and Consistent Communication

- Use clear language
- Communicate 1 main idea
- Do not “suggest” or “imply”
- Avoid jargon, acronyms, and abbreviations
- Check for understanding.
- Be aware of body language and facial expressions.
Strategy 2: Be aware of on and off the job supporters

- On the job: working with employment specialists
- Off the job: working with employment specialists, independent living supports, family members, residential staff, etc.
Strategy 3: Get to know each other

- Demonstrate respect by saying hello, goodbye, please, and thank you
- Let the employee know about your own interests and hobbies outside of work
- Be sure to introduce the employee to coworkers and remember to do so when new people come into the business
- Make sure the individual is included in meetings and social gatherings. This may require thinking about adapting his/her work schedule
Strategy 4: Facilitating Co-worker Supports

- Let the employee know where their co-workers eat lunch
- Make sure the employee is included in workday celebrations (ex. birthday celebrations) and out of work activities (ex. the office softball team or community service).
- Be a “bridge” between the employee with an intellectual or developmental disability and other employees.
Strategy 5: Work Directly on Project Together

- Be involved in the same projects as the employee.
- Attend staff meetings with the employee.
- Check in with co-workers to see what they think is working well and is not working well for the employee.
Tip 1: Support New Skills and Abilities

- Know whether or not your employee can pick up a new job responsibility on the “fly” or may need more support and training.
- Know what you are going to ask your employee to do before they ask you what they should do next.
- Know who is the best person to provide instruction on a new task.
- Know the best way to give the employee instructions: verbal, written, hands-on demonstration, or video.
- Consider developing a checklist in written, picture, or another format that can easily be reordered.
Tip 2: Facilitate Natural Supports

- Develop a clear job description.
- Help the employee manage their time.
- Have a regularly scheduled check in meeting with the employee also supports time management.
- Set the expectation that the employee start each work day checking email and voicemail.
- Support the use of scheduling technology such as Microsoft Outlook.
- Use of other technology as needed
Tip 3: Use Typical Office Technology

- Ask what tools the employee uses outside of the office.
- Request support from their employment specialist and/or from your state’s Department of Vocational Rehabilitation.
Tip 4: Take a Long Term View

- Mentor the employee.
- Help the employee report and track their professional growth.
- Conduct formal performance evaluations to identify professional development and leadership experiences.
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