

# Career Services for Students with Disabilities

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## How DO I Act With that Person with a Physical Disability?

→ Overall, use common sense and general sensitivity.

→ Approach from a stance of capability rather than inability.

- ▶ Wheelchair:
  - ▶ Don't push a wheelchair without asking if for permission/if needed
  - ▶ Don't assume that a person NEEDS help (e.g., people who assume that a student needing a wheelchair needs a ride in the snow - the organization needs to clear snow, the student needs to get self to class or work)
  - ▶ Don't put hands on or lean on a wheelchair as this is invading body space
  - ▶ Try to lean down if talking for a while
  - ▶ Don't assume that being in wheelchair is a tragedy - it is a means of transportation
  - ▶ Don't move a wheelchair away if the user transfers out of the chair
  - ▶ Be aware that user of a wheelchair may also use other means of transport

## How DO I Act with that Person with a Physical Disability?

- ➔ Ask, Ask, Ask
- ➔ Don't be afraid
- ➔ Don't Avoid

- ▶ Vision Loss
  - ▶ Don't grab/lead a person with vision loss without permission
  - ▶ If help is desired, the person should take the helper's bent arm at the elbow and follows behind
  - ▶ Don't interrupt a person's cane traveling AND don't assume the need for help
  - ▶ Ask the person with vision loss if they need assistance with printed materials, not their companion
  - ▶ Don't touch a service animal when the collar is on
  - ▶ Don't shout at a person who is blind, they are not deaf

# How DO I Act with that Person with a Physical Disability?

➔ Assume Capability

- ▶ Hearing Loss
  - ▶ Raising your voice won't help
  - ▶ Don't assume that the person understands you, nor that they will ask
  - ▶ Write things down or ask for feedback to ensure understanding
  - ▶ Realize that hearing aids make EVERYTHING louder, NOT clearer
  - ▶ A person with hearing loss will do better in a small group with everyone facing
  - ▶ Offer an interpreter or CART or an FM device
  - ▶ If using an interpreter, ask them and the user the best positioning, light and background affect these (*true also for lip-reading*)
  - ▶ Be sure that any videos are captioned

## How DO I Act with that Person with a Physical Disability?

➔ Again, Ask....

- ▶ Cerebral Palsy or Other Obvious Muscular Disability Affecting Mobility or Speech
  - ▶ Slow down when walking
  - ▶ If neuromuscular, may not need assistance
  - ▶ Ask
  - ▶ If speech is affected, listen carefully; but DO ask for clarification
  - ▶ If speech is labored due to Cerebral Palsy, remain calm, look away briefly
  - ▶ Continued pressure of being “looked at”/obviously “waited for” reinforces the palsy or spastic movements

## HIDDEN DISABILITIES

- ❑ Most common in our setting
- ❑ Various types
- ❑ Students may not know how to advocate

- ▶ Learning
- ▶ ADD
- ▶ Traumatic Brain Injury
- ▶ Psychological (Depression, Anxiety, Bi-Polar)
- ▶ Medical that is not as obvious -
  - ▶ Fibromyalgia
  - ▶ Back Issues
  - ▶ Cardiac
  - ▶ Epilepsy or Seizure Disorder
- ▶ Autism Spectrum

# So, we're in Career Services – What do WE do?

- ▶ Let's explore it from two angles:
  - ▶ Helping Employers
  - ▶ Helping Students

# FOR BOTH - Use 'Person First' Language

*Empowering the person,  
not the disability*

*Language reflects  
attitude*

*"The final barrier"*

In an earlier slide, I switched words around to make a typical designation "person first" - do you remember where?

Examples:

- ▶ Students with hearing loss
- ▶ Person who uses a wheelchair
- ▶ Student/person vs. medical model, patient
- ▶ Persons with disabilities
- ▶ Differing views on euphemisms (such as "challenges")
- ▶ SIMPLEST WAY - Ask the person



# Planning with and for EMPLOYERS

## ACCESS/ADA

- ▶ Ensure that IUP held interviews are in accessible locations
- ▶ Ensure that employers are aware that IUP requires that their (employers) interviews meet ADA standards
- ▶ Ensure that employers are aware of legal and illegal interviews and procedures

## ACCOMMODATIONS

- ▶ Offer both employers and interviewees the opportunity to seek accommodations
- ▶ Via enrollment forms
- ▶ Technically, may have a due date for response, in order to secure accommodations

# CONSIDER

▶ PHYSICAL  
ACCESS

▶ PROGRAMMATIC  
ACCESS

## Physical Access

Can the student get in the building, and navigate it and services?

- ▶ EXAMPLES for Services and Interviews
  - ▶ Is there an elevator?
  - ▶ Is there a ramp?
  - ▶ Is there an automatic door or a call button or an aide?
  - ▶ Are there designated parking spaces for persons with disabilities nearby?
  - ▶ Are pathways at least 36" wide?
  - ▶ Are there areas for turning?
  - ▶ Can a wheelchair get under the tables?
  - ▶ Accessible Restrooms
  - ▶ Alternate locations (e.g. interview rooms)

*(More at:  
<http://www.washington.edu/doit/equal-access-universal-design-career-services>)*

# Programmatic Access

Can the student  
access the  
materials, answer  
the questions?

- ▶ EXAMPLES:
  - ▶ Has provision been made for alternate means of communicating information?
    - ▶ Could be enlarged text
    - ▶ CART or interpreters
    - ▶ Materials in braille
    - ▶ Access to a screen reader
    - ▶ Access to FM, loop or other devices to aid hearing or allowance for the candidate to provide these (clear message to this effect)
    - ▶ Website access, for instance pdfs that are not embedded
    - ▶ Materials with sharp contrasts in background and text
    - ▶ Fonts that are sans serif

## STUDENTS

- Include Disability as a category on CPDC website and link to DSS
- Joint sponsoring (NACE)
- ▶ In addition to general services available to all students, make explicit the need to think about disclosing disability
- ▶ Whether to disclose may be affected by whether the disability is obvious or hidden
- ▶ Several university websites have information such as this on their disability specific section of their career site:
  - ▶ U Washington DO-IT
  - ▶ Rochester institute of Technology ([www.rit.edu/emcs/oce/student/job-seekers-disabilities](http://www.rit.edu/emcs/oce/student/job-seekers-disabilities))
  - ▶ Muhlenberg College
  - ▶ Colorado.edu
  - ▶ Careercenter.umich.edu/content/resources-students-disabilities

# Things to Consider As You Advise/ A Student Decides Whether to Disclose

- ▶ Assuming that the employer has defined essential functions as defined in ADA Employment Regulations
  - ▶ Will the duties be difficult to perform without accommodations?
  - ▶ What are possible accommodations?
  - ▶ If those accommodations are provided, will the duties still be difficult to perform?
  - ▶ Determine other possible accommodations

# When the Student is Planning to Disclose - Plan of Action

- ▶ Briefly describe the disability
- ▶ Briefly describe skills and abilities
- ▶ Briefly describe the functional limitations
- ▶ Briefly describe typical accommodations
- ▶ See information following from RIT:

Timing	Benefits	Negatives	Recommendation
On resume, cover letter, and/or employment application	Peace of mind – been up front with the employer.	Draws attention to disability rather than skills. May disqualify from the job before having an opportunity to present skills/abilities.	Isn't recommended. However, will likely need to disclose disability during the application process to be considered for special programs for disability.
When employer contacts for an interview	Peace of mind - been up front with the employer. For visible disabilities, reduces potential "shock factor" when arrive for the interview.	May distract the interviewer from your skills and ability to do the job, so may not be seriously considered for the position.	May be necessary if accommodations are needed during the interview process.
During the interview	Peace of mind - have been up front. May enable to present disability in a positive and personal manner.	May distract the interviewer from skills/ability to do the job, so may not be seriously considered. The interview may be more nerve-wracking.	



Timing	Benefits	Negatives	Recommendation
After the interview, before the offer	Were up front. Both were able to focus on skills and abilities during the interview.	Employer may feel that disclosure should have been earlier - can indicate needed to learn more about the essential functions of the job first. May not be seriously considered for the position.	
After the offer, before acceptance	If offer is rescinded, may have legal recourse.	Employer may feel that disclosure should have been earlier – can indicate needed to learn more about the essential functions of the job prior to disclosing.	
After starting the job	Gives an opportunity to prove capability. If disclosure impacts employment status, may have legal recourse.	Becomes more difficult the longer the wait. Job performance may suffer accommodations. Employer may accuse of falsifying qualifications. May not have legal recourse against unfavorable changes in employment status.	

Timing	Benefits	Negatives	Recommendation
After a problem on the job	Had a chance to prove capabilities related to the job.	Relationship with employer and co-workers could be damaged. Employer may accuse of falsifying qualifications. May not have legal recourse against unfavorable changes in employment status.	Disclosure is highly recommended prior to problems occurring on the job.
Never	Disability doesn't become a factor in hiring decisions. Employer doesn't need to know about disability as long as it doesn't impact ability to do the job.	If disability is discovered, employer may accuse you of falsifying your qualifications. You may not have legal recourse against unfavorable changes in your employment status.	

# Help Both Employers and Students with Determining Accommodations

Ask the questions 

1. **What does the task or assignment require?** Break down all of the components of the job. This will help you to determine the best way to fully include an employee with a disability.
2. **What physical, sensory, and cognitive skills are needed?** Compare the skills required to complete a task to the skills of the potential employee. Does a modification need to be made in order for the person to be successful?
3. **What components of the task require accommodation?** Check with the employee to see which aspects he or she feels require accommodations.
4. **What accommodation options exist?** The employee is your best resource. If he or she requires assistance with answering this question, be sure to access campus and community resources.

# Resources

- ▶ Career Services at:
  - ▶ University of Colorado
  - ▶ Washington University DO-IT Project
  - ▶ Muhlenberg College
  - ▶ Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT)
  - ▶ University of Michigan
  - ▶ Alan Muir, University of Tennessee
  - ▶ University of Kansas