

Introduction

Starting a new job can make us feel nervous.

It can take time to get used to a new environment, new faces and new ways of doing things.

Some employees with intellectual disability have no, or limited experience working and may feel nervous and unsure when starting a new job.



Things you can do to support people during orientation include:

1. Be welcoming and friendly

When orientating people and helping them feel comfortable in a new job, “*human connection is the most important thing*”. For example, being given a tour of the workplace by the boss when starting work was recognised as vital by employees who spoke to VALID.

// ... When I first started, I was greeted with a handshake and it made me feel really good, comfortable and accepted being here...that’s exactly what I want; I want to feel accepted and wanted. //

2. Give people clear information about what will happen during orientation

Send out information at least a week before the person’s first day with:

- Start and finish times
- A map that includes parking and public transport
- Where to go and who will meet them there
- What to bring (lunch, bank account details etc)
- What they will be given to use at work (laptop etc)
- A schedule of what will happen on the first day
- Who they will be working with

3. Complete the orientation process over a few weeks

This will give the person time to learn aspects of the job and as they develop trust and feel comfortable asking questions. It also gives people a better sense of how the things they have talked about during orientation apply to day-to-day working situations. Make a schedule that includes talking about the most important things first, including policies and procedures.

4. Give people clear information about what is expected of them in their role

Provide people with clear information in easy read or plain English about their:

- position description
- regular supervision
- contract and terms of employment

Take time to talk about this information and answer any questions the person may have.

This guide can help you to develop your own information. You may need to seek advice.

5. Tell people it's OK to ask questions and give them plenty of opportunities.

Let the person know who else they can go to with questions. Introduce the person to the administration team and let them know what they can help with (pay etc). Consider a 'buddy system' so there is someone else besides a manager they can talk to if they have questions. You may also choose to provide a brief summary of all workers and their roles.

6. Make sure necessary workplace adjustments are put in place

All employers are required by law to provide reasonable workplace adjustments to staff.

This may include providing information in accessible formats, additional support, supervision and training, use of practical tools to help people to complete tasks, flexible working hours, and modified equipment or technology.

// ... A workplace adjustment is a change to a work process, practice, procedure or environment that enable an employee with disability to perform their job in a way that minimises the impact of their disability (Australian Network on Disability). //

Talk to JobAccess about a free workplace assessment on 1800 464 800.

Find an example of a Workplace Adjustment policy

For more information

- Watch Episode 3 of VALID's Let's Work web series
- Read pages 20-26 in the VALID Employment Project consultation report



www.valid.org.au