

Introduction

We all benefit from support at work.

Here are tips to consider when supporting all staff to be successful in their role:



1. Have and use a workplace adjustment policy for all staff.

All staff are entitled to and may benefit from workplace adjustments. These are changes made in the work process, practice or environment that helps someone do their job better.

Here is a list of examples and adjustments and some places to seek advice

Here is an example of a workplace adjustment policy

2. Ask people what supports they need. Keep the conversation going.

Give people the opportunity to tell you what they need as trust develops and they get to know their job. Include discussions about support and workplace adjustments as a regular agenda item in supervision.

“I think that can be hard because sometimes people feel like they'll be treated differently or in an adverse way if they require additional supports. And we need different things at different times if we want to work well”

3. Observe and check in when you think someone may need support

“We looked for signs of when people looked comfortable or uncomfortable and we can check in about it”

4. Show people what to do and give clear instructions

Being shown what to do by 'the boss' or line-manager is particularly helpful to people when learning a new task. Keep instructions clear and simple and break tasks into steps.

5. Ask the person if they think visual tools would be useful

Visual tools may help people to complete regular tasks. Down Syndrome Association give examples in Practical Strategies for Training and Support

Be aware that some people don't like to use visual tools or may find it embarrassing to be singled out. Talk to people about what will work best for them and be prepared to try different things and see how it goes.

*“...there's a list I have to do. And they put it on the post...and every other person sees it
...I'd prefer to probably have it somewhere hidden”*

6. Family and friends

Family and friends can be a great support to people to work. Talk to the person about whether there is someone that can help you to understand the best way to support them at work and answer any questions you may have.

To read more about the role of family and friend visit Everyone Can Work

7. National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) funding for support to work

People who have an NDIS plan can access funding for Finding, Keeping and Changing Jobs
Finding, Keeping and Changing Jobs

. This may include having a support worker attend the workplace to provide:

- support to learn new skills, and build independence at work
- ongoing, on-the-job support to complete work tasks and keep a job
- personal care at work, e.g. help with eating meals or using the bathroom.

If you are employing someone who will have a support worker in the workplace, have a clear, upfront conversation about what they expect from their worker while they are there.

Visit Inclusion Australia's Everyone Can Work website to read about support people can receive through the NDIS to work.

8. Disability Employment Services (DES)

Disability Employment Services can provide support to people to find a job, settle in and learn new tasks, and adjust to changes in the role.

If you are planning to employ someone for more than eight hours a week you may consider using a DES. Visit Everyone Can Work to read more about DES.

If you have already employed someone and they need support to keep their job they may be able to access Work Assist.

9. Provide information about support that is available for all staff

Employee Assistance Program

If you use an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), make sure you give employees clear information about what it is and how to use it, and support as needed.

Employee Assistance Fund

Free workplace assessments are available through the Employee Assistance Fund. They can help find solutions and make your workplace more flexible and accessible to employees with disability. Visit the JobAccess website or free call 1800 464 800.

COVID-19 & working from home

The Australian Network on Disability has some excellent tips on supporting employees with disability through these new ways of working, staying connected and mentally healthy.

For more information

- Watch Episode 5 of VALID's Let's Work web series
- Read pages 33-40 in the VALID Employment Project consultation report
- Visit Inclusion Australia's Everyone Can Work website
- Order CID's More than just a job - tips for employers
- Watch My Work Matters