

VALID Employment Project - What people told us about good support at work

Who we talked with



The Employment Project team asked people with intellectual disability what good support looks like at work.



We talked with twenty people with intellectual disability who work in **open employment**.



Open Employment is when people with and without disability work together in regular jobs.



We talked to twelve managers (and coworkers) that employ people with intellectual disabilities.

What people we found out



We heard a lot about ways to support people at work.



People said that employing people with an intellectual disability is a good idea.



They said having people with intellectual disability at work can make the workplace better for everyone.



Managers said that people with intellectual disability bring new ideas.



We found out that to support people with an intellectual disability at work, workplaces need to:



1. Make sure you know what you are expected to do



2. Work on building trust with you

3. Be honest. Tell you about things you do well and things you can improve



4. Know what your skills are and help you find ways to use them at work



5. Make changes at work to support you to do your job as well as you can.

These changes are called **workplace adjustments**

The best things about work



People with intellectual disability told us what they like best about work.

Some things people said are:

- meeting people and making friends
- getting paid
- helping other people
- gaining confidence and social skills
- being given more responsibility outside of work



One person with intellectual disability said the best thing is:

to know that you're actually getting a paycheck; like everyone else, you're able to pay and save for things and do things.



Some things managers said were great about work are:

- working in a team
- making a difference in people's lives
- getting things done.

Recruitment



Recruitment is about finding the right person for the job.

We asked people with intellectual disability how they got their job.



- Some people got jobs through people they know



- Some had support from an employment consultant.
- Some got their jobs in other ways.

Managers talked about ways to make applying for a job easier by:



- giving you information about jobs in easy read or plain English
- trying to make interviews more comfortable

Recruitment



Things workplaces can do

- Invite people with intellectual disability to apply for roles
- Give you information about things that can make it easier for you when they apply for a job (like bring a support person to the interview)
- Ask you what support you need before the interview
- Send you the interview questions before the interview so you have time to get ready
- Involve people with disability when hiring new staff (e.g. interviewing people and choosing who to hire)
- Think about using Disability Employment Services

Orientation



Orientation is about:

- Getting started at work
- Learning how to do your job
- Learning the way things work



Some people with intellectual disability may not have a lot of experience at work.



Managers need to think about how to make you feel welcome when you start.



Managers might need to help you to learn about:

- what happens at work
- what people expect you to do at work
- other people you will work with.



Managers said that it is good to talk about these things as you get to know each other, instead of all at once.

Orientation



Things workplaces can do



- Give you a chance to get to know the workplace and other people who work there before you start
- Tell you what will happen in the orientation process (e.g. a timetable)
- Take time (e.g. a few weeks) to do orientation
- Give you clear information about what is expected of you at work. This includes things you might not know about having a job if you have not worked before
- Tell you it's ok to ask questions and give you lots of chances to ask questions.
- Tell you who you can speak to about paperwork when you start a job



Knowing how to do your job well



We asked people about how they know if they are doing their job well.



Everyone agreed that feedback is really important.

Feedback is when someone tells you about what you did well and what you can improve on.



People need to develop trust between them so that they can give and receive feedback.



This can happen during **supervision** with a manager.

Supervision is when you meet with your manager to talk about your role.

Knowing how to do your job well



Things workplaces can do

- Take time to develop trust
- Give you lots of feedback! This means telling you about the things you are doing well and things to help you to do your job better
- Ask you to give feedback about how things are going.
 - What do you like?
 - What is working well?
 - How could things be better?
- Use both **formal** and **informal** supervision while at work
 - Formal supervision** means regular meetings with your manager. It may be once a week, every two weeks or once a month.
 - Informal supervision** means having a chat or checking in about how you are going during the day
- Work with you to decide on a good way to do supervision together.
- Use a guide to make sure you talk about all of the important things in supervision
- Make sure casual and part time staff also have regular supervision.

Having the right support at work



We asked people about what support they get to work.

People said they get support from:

- their boss
- their team
- a support worker or employment consultant
- sometimes their family.



The best way for your manager to know what sort of support you need is to ask you.



As you develop trust at work you may feel more comfortable talking about what support you need.

The right support to work



Things workplaces can do

- Have and use a **workplace adjustment policy** for all staff. This tells managers how they can make changes at work to make it easier for you to do your job.
- Ask you what support you need
- Give you chances to tell them what you need as you get to know your manager and learn more about your job
- Watch how you are going and talk to you if they think you may need more support
- Work together to solve problems and try new ways to do things
- Show you what to do and give clear instructions
- Ask you if you would like to use visual tools (like a checklist or photos)
- Make sure you can have your say in meetings

Workplace Culture



Workplace culture is about feeling welcome, included and valued at work.



A good way to make you feel welcome at work is to talk to you and ask you how you are.



People told us that meetings are important.

There are lots of ways to make meetings better for people with intellectual disability.



One way is to use [**Voice At The Table's Top Ten Tips**](#) for Inclusive Meetings.



Sometimes when people work in part time or casual roles they miss out on important things like meetings or social events.

Workplace Culture



Things workplaces can do

- Make an effort every day to talk to you;
- Use inclusive meeting tips to make meetings better for everyone
- Include people with disability in the planning of events
- Give clear information about what will happen at events like Christmas parties.

Skills and next steps



This is about making sure people are supported to think about their career, skills they want to learn and jobs they might want to do in the future.



People had lots of ideas about what skills they wanted to develop.



Some workplaces gave people a chance to learn on the job or do workshops.



Managers talked about:

- helping you with your resume
- sending you information about other jobs or opportunities.

Skills and next steps



Things workplaces can do

- Make a plan with you to find out new skills you want to learn and talk about jobs you are interested in.
- Include you in training at your work
- Make sure you are included if you work in a casual, part time or project role
- Give you information about jobs, training and chances to meet people and learn new skills for work.
- Be a referee if you apply for a new job.
- Talk with you about skills you have learned at work so you can write them on your resume.

People with intellectual disability want to tell other people who want to work:



Give it your best. Get out there, give it your best and try it, try as much as you can... Don't let anything hold you back. If you want to go for it, go for it.

They want to tell managers:



Don't say no to them. Just let them have a try and I'm sure they'll do great ... We will do a good job.

It would be great for you to support this because, look, people with disability are the same as everybody else. They may need a little bit more training but look they're willing to learn.

Managers want to tell other managers:



You must do it. Your organisation will be better off. You will learn things you didn't realise you didn't know. You will be a better boss and the organisation will do better work if you employ people with intellectual disability.

Things workplaces can do



- Give you a chance to get a job
- Know that people with intellectual disability need understanding and support, like everyone does
- Get ready before hiring a person with intellectual disability:
 - look at the whole workplace, not just your job
 - understand why they want to employ someone with an intellectual disability
 - know how people in the workplace think and feel about people with intellectual disability
 - make sure everyone is ready to welcome you
 - having good ways of doing things set up to support you.

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