

The Association for Persons in Supported Employment

Ethical Guidelines for Professionals in Supported Employment

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Contribution in the community as a valued, interdependent member occurs when human dignity is respected and opportunities are provided for each individual to pursue their unique path of development and fulfillment. While paid human service professionals cannot create inclusive communities, they can positively impact their emergence and growth. For trainers of staff in supported employment, these basic human principles should be considered:

Individuality

People receive assistance as unique individuals with varying interests, preferences, and aptitudes. They should not be grouped together on the basis of label, functioning level, or convenience of support.

Choice

There are sufficient options related to each individual's interests and desires in life in order to exercise control and autonomy over their life's direction. The choices made by an individual are the result of being fully informed through direct personal experience and/or considering information on potential alternatives.

Respect

Services are always dignified, age appropriate, and enhancing.

Participation

People have the opportunity to actively participate in all their chosen pursuits of life.

Competence

Individuals are provided opportunities to develop skills of interest and use in their lives by discovering and expressing gifts and capacities.

Social Inclusion

People have access to diverse individuals in social contexts in order to build friendships, working relationships, and networks of individuals who go to

shared places, have similar interests, or experience other commonalities.

Community Settings with Minimal Intrusion

Services are designed to support persons in their pursuit of a quality life in natural settings in ways which minimize artificiality or restrictiveness.

Employment

At all times, the individual receiving supports is the central driving force in the development of options and decisions. In the design of training specific to integrated employment, professionals have an obligation to reflect the following principles and accomplishments in an effort to promote services consistent with human dignity.

Career Planning

Employment should be an option for any person interested in working, regardless of label, support need, or perceived functioning level.

Job seekers, or at their invitation, family, friends, or co-workers, are the best source to personally convey information of their personal interests, preferences, skills, aptitudes, and life goals. These considerations are the basis for choices in employment opportunity, rather than program or agency considerations.

In accessing information, maximum use of personal networks and situational experiences provides information to help guide career support, rather than focusing on limitations which exclude people from possibilities.

Individual rights to confidentiality are observed.

Job Development

Approaches for developing employer relations and linking individuals with private and public sector labor needs are respectful and image enhancing.

Jobs developed are reflective of personal interests, preferences, and abilities, as well as employer needs.

Materials and interactions are professional and businesslike.

People are not portrayed in ways which contribute to stereotypes or other misperceptions of individuals with disabilities.

At no time is hiring pursued based on charity.

Job Acquisition

Job placement decisions are made by the individual based on reliable information of job quality, work culture, and employee/employer benefit.

Jobs are individually arranged to match a person's interests, preferences, skills, aptitudes, and life goals.

While some work experiences can be productive for building an employment history and developing skills, these experiences are thought of as initial career steps and not as career fulfillment.

Compensation should reflect the norms of the employment market for similar positions and performance.

When sub-minimum wages are provided, they are viewed as temporary until more creative job matching, training, or other supports can be developed to enhance productivity.

Job placements are not made on the basis of service convenience or availability.

Work Support

Existing supports natural to the work environment are maximized for training and ongoing support. Artificial training or programs to change behavior considered highly unusual by the work culture of the job setting are minimized. Teaching techniques which may convey poor images, stigma, or devalued status are not used.

Best training practices and technology appropriate to the setting and culture are utilized.

Appropriate evaluations and outcome measures are provided.

Specialized jargon from the disability field is minimized.

At all times, the business culture is respected and integrated into the support network for the individual to succeed.

Use of accommodations, technology, or other job modifications needed are explored and developed in consideration of their potential for success, non-intrusiveness, and generalization to other life domains.

Life Support

Efforts to provide a holistic and integrated life service support are made. Individuals have consistent service and community opportunities which connect to the fabric of work, home, social, and recreational needs.

Measures are taken to ensure that the individual's family members and friends are involved in planning efforts.

Career Advancement

Persons have the opportunity and support to advance to other employment opportunities which may provide new and/or greater responsibilities, compensation, and challenge.

Advancement is based upon the perspective of personal future goals but is not contingent upon restrictive program guidelines concerning employment duration.

Feedback on the success of positions within a career is dependent on the individual employee, employers, and the input of others important to and chosen by the person.

Staff Training

Training, both in topic and format, is generated by the needs of service recipients and their trainers and promotes skills and values development which will enhance the quality of life of individuals with disabilities. To this end, the following training principles are endorsed:

- Training results in better learning outcomes when it is offered proactively rather than as a reaction to crisis situations.
- The best training is an empowerment of individuals or agencies to become competent to provide their own ongoing training.
- Training is an interactive process which needs to be ongoing to respond to dynamic needs and to ensure state-of-the-art practices are being conveyed.
- There is respect and encouragement for what can be learned from each other from all training participants.
- There is an effort to build local training capacity, leverage existing local resources, knowledge, and expertise, and design training sensitive to and effective within local culture.
- No one trainer, technique, or approach has the one right answer. A trainer has an obligation to bring in the diversity of approaches from the field and to state when she/he does not have an answer.
- Trainers keep current on state-of-the-art in the field and do not present dated information.
- There is an avoidance of presenting "quick-fix" solutions which go beyond the data presented.
- Good adult learning principles are used in training design.
- Trainees are active participants in identifying training outcomes and options based on what's needed to enhance the quality of life of individuals with disabilities.
- An effort is made to assess the audience's needs and level of understanding before any training is offered.
- Whenever possible, follow-ups to training are done to see how the information presented is being implemented.

Trainers need to stay involved in direct services and with the individuals served so their training remains grounded in reality.

- Confidentiality of individual's personal life experiences are respected and maintained.
- There is a commitment to respond to feedback from the training audience and to consider the evaluative information for future training.
- Training is presented only in the areas in which the trainer is qualified.
- Skill and value development require application and reinforcement. Trainees are encouraged to participate, reinforced for implementation of new skills, and supported to train others in their organizations and communities.
- Training is structured so that the trainees can apply skills easily and can share the informational content in a meaningful way with others.
- The evaluation of training effectiveness is a complex but necessary process that is conducted regularly with trainees.

APSE is a national membership organization committed to expanding and improving integrated employment opportunities and outcomes for persons with disabilities. For more information, please write, call, or e-mail:

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The Association for Persons in Supported Employment Supported Employment Professional's Statement of Adoption

As a supported employment professional, I, _____, hereby adopt these Ethical Guidelines and agree to honor the stated principles herein.

Signature _____ Date _____