

Effectively Supporting and Accommodating CIL Staff

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Today's Presenters

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Disabilities Represented on Staff

- Visual
- Hearing
- Physical
- Health
- Respiratory
- Depression
- Anxiety
- PTSD
- Intellectual
- Developmental
- Autism
- Autoimmune
- Spinal Cord Injury
- ADHD
- Psychosis
- Processing
- Speech
- Mobility
- And more!

In addition to different disabilities...

- Different Intersections:
 - Ages
 - Races
 - Religions
 - Educational Background
 - Professional Experience

- Gender Identities
- Sexual Orientation
- Life Experiences

Unique individuals call for...

- Unique Approaches!
- Likely means some trial and error in determining what works.
- Employee-Directed
- Individual accommodations and available universal options

CIL Employers

As you know, having a disability does not mean employers should:

- Give special treatment
- Shift essential job functions
- Enable any learned helplessness

We are uniquely positioned to offer:

- Understanding and encouragement
- Peer support and lived experience
- A bit of tough love when needed
- Creative solutions
- Ongoing support and encouragement

Workplace Culture

- Leadership talks openly about our own disabilities and strategies we use for support.
- Staff, particularly leadership staff, are encouraged to talk about their disabilities and experience with coworkers as a form of peer support whenever they feel comfortable to do so.
- We had a staff meeting series where staff volunteered to share the accommodations they use in the workplace. These examples not only helped staff get ideas on how to support consumers but it also helped staff who may benefit from similar accommodations.

Normalize Accommodations

- From the start!
- In your policies
- In your marketing for new positions
- In your orientation
- For everyone
- Job descriptions

Scenarios for Discussion

Scenario 1:

Staff member with intellectual disability was having difficulty with remote work during a hybrid schedule.

Strategies:

- Shared Microsoft To-Do List
- Step by step instructions for common tasks to refer back to
- Increasing days in office where there is more structure and less distractions
- Providing strategies to other staff on clear communication when working with her

Tools to Stay on Task

For Discussion: What are some tools, strategies, or accommodations your coworkers or consumers use to help with time management, organization, prioritizing tasks, and remembering processes?

Scenario 2:

A staff member with ADHD and a psychiatric disability had a difficult time with criticism, leading to conflict with supervisors, unfounded fear of being fired, and a prolonged need for reassurance and encouragement.

- Strategy that didn't work: Verbal reassurance that her job was safe and that management believed in her capacity to do well.
- Additional information that helped us understand:
 - Supervisor from previous employment made her feel incompetent and like her job was at risk on a regular basis.
 - Staff identified as Queer, and some key members of her family were not accepting.

Scenario 2 Successful Approach

- Upper management started spending more time with her.
 - CPO worked on some projects with her.
 - CEO scheduled regular mentoring/virtual coffee time with her.
 - The staff member developed trust and confidence through these interactions.
 - She now appreciates direct, honest feedback.
- Emotional Deposits Approach

Strategies to Build Confidence

For Discussion:

What are some tools, strategies, or accommodations that may build confidence and self-esteem in your coworkers or consumers?

Scenario 3:

- Staff member with psychiatric disability was experiencing significant mental health symptoms and checked themselves into intensive treatment program.
- Other information to note:
 - Staff member had recently moved to the area and did not have a support network nearby
 - Staff member's parents had a history of doubting her ability to live independently due to her disabilities, limiting her trust and ability to use them as a support

Scenario 3 Successful Approach

- Since phone use was limited in the facility, leadership remained "on call" after hours to help support the staff at any time
- Asked for specific ways we could help--What do you need or wish you had there?
- Provided comfy lounge clothes and hygiene items
- Access to sick leave pool
- Served as an advocate when family was served notice of commitment hearing
 - With permission, communicated with staff's mother and her appointed attorney
- Upon discharge, helped brainstorm solutions for recognizing concerning symptoms to seek help sooner
- Granted request to transfer to office closer to support system when opening became available

Tools for Mental Health Support

For Discussion:

What are some tools, strategies, or accommodations your coworkers or consumers use to help with psychiatric episodes and times when they need additional emotional and advocacy support?

Tools

- AskJan
- Microsoft To-Do
- Shared Live Documents (Share Point)
- Outlook Calendar
- Encouragement notes
- Kudoboard
- Teams chats
- Assistive Technology
- Accessible Offices
- Connecting with other CILs!

Stay in touch

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