



Tips for Employers...from the Work A Day in My Shoes folks...

The Work A Day in My Shoes program is a collaboration between four local agencies based in High River, Alberta. It is designed to promote the employment of people who may have some invisible challenges through understanding and simple strategies that can be used to promote effective workplace settings.

Work A Day in My Shoes offers support to employers and their staff teams regarding the hiring and maintenance of employees with workplace challenges.

Three major workplace issues have been identified as being important to successful employment for people with invisible challenges.

1. WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION

We know that communication is the foundation to your business's success. Good communication between employees, management, and customers, result in better outcomes. And, we know that good communication results in a happier and less stressful workplace.

Here are some strategies you can use to ensure communication is effective.

- Give information in one or two sentences.
- Give information both orally and written.
- Use clear, simple, and concrete words.
- Check with the person for understanding.
- If necessary, repeat the information using the same words.
- Skip the use of acronyms.
- Speak calmly and slowly in a clear voice.
- Avoid the use of negatives (say 'do this' instead of 'don't')
- Use their words as much as possible.
- Pay attention to your body language (try to be relaxed).
- Be patient and use encouraging words.

Call Literacy for Life at 403-7652-5090 for information and strategies for making your workplace communication clear, simple and practical.

2. MATCHING ABILITIES TO ROLE – THE KEY TO SUCCESS!

Creating a good fit between ability and environment is the key to success. Some jobs may work for some, not for others. Success in finding and keeping work requires clarifying this fit and providing appropriate strategies specific to the job situation.

Here are some strategies to ensure the abilities are a fit within the role:

- Add an employee that has the right set of skills for the specific job you require.
- Ask the employee about what they believe their skill set to be within that specific role
- Talk with the employee about accommodations needed in order to make the workplace successful
- Talk with staff teams about any assistance required
- Promote flexibility while being clear about expectations
- Watch and listen for signs of stress
- Check in with both the employee and staff team both formally and informally
- Add local resources to your team that will help you be successful in employing and maintaining an employee.

Call the SNAPS office at 403-603-3232 for assistance with strategies that can help employers, employees and staff teams find and keep staff in successful, meaningful work environments.

3. SOCIAL SKILLS

It is often a problem with social skills that derails an employment situation. Employees that are described as “weird” , “annoying” or “difficult” can be a challenge for both staff teams and employers. Employees who have the right technical skills required to successfully complete job requirements can be assisted to be more socially appropriate with the right coaching.

Here are some strategies that can help someone be more socially skilled:

- Calmly present immediate feedback whenever possible .
- Be clear about the behavior and its effects on others.
- Give concrete examples of how to change the behavior.
- Add staff person with whom the employee is comfortable to be a social coach.
- Give opportunities to practice the required skill in a place that is safe (physically and emotionally)
- Praise whenever possible with specific examples of the desired behavior.

101 Centre Staff can help employers be honest with their employees who may struggle with Social Skills. They can offer strategies and facilitate understanding with employees, employers and staff teams. Call 403-652-4776 for more information!

**Thank you to High River Citizens on Patrol for delivering this tip sheet!!!
For more information on C.O.P. call 403-652-2357.**