

Inclusion Training

Including members and volunteers with disabilities in your organization

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Agenda

- Facts and terms
- Attitudes and fears
- Benefits of inclusion
- Accommodation process
- Disclosure of disability
- Communication and boundaries
- Recruitment and other Resources



Ohio Service Inclusion Project

What do we mean by *Service Inclusion*?

- Service Inclusion is the active engagement of people with disabilities as members and volunteers in all levels of National and Community Service

Partners for Inclusion

- AmeriCorps programs across Ohio
- Ohio Commission on Service and Volunteerism
- The Ohio State University Nisonger Center and other disability organizations in Ohio

Did you know?



- 18% of Americans (51.2 million) say they have a disability
- 12% (32.5 million) say they have a severe disability
- 72% of people 80 and older say they have disabilities

(2006 census data)

What is a disability?

Disability (as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act 1990): (a) a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of an individual, (b) a record of such impairment, (c) or being regarded as having such impairment

- Most disabilities are not apparent. Examples of “hidden disabilities” include mental health disorders, epilepsy, asthma, and learning disabilities

What are some of the attitudes we hold about people with disabilities?

- Disabled is disabled all the way down. Having one disability must mean there are many others.
- If I can't see the disability, it must not exist
- People with disabilities want more than their fair share, or are dependent on the government for support
- People with disabilities frequently sue people or organizations that make them angry
- People with disabilities are inspirational because they “overcome” their disabilities

Attitudes

Disability simulations are, in general, not supported by the disability community

- Why do you think that is?
- What would a successful simulation look like?



What are some of the **fears** we have about including people with disabilities?

Fear: Many additional resources (i.e. staff time, funding) are required to support individuals with disabilities

- More than half of all reasonable accommodations cost nothing at all
- One study found that for every \$1 an organization puts into making an accommodation for an employee, the organization got \$10 in benefits such as increased productivity
- You are required to only provide reasonable accommodations, not *unreasonable* accommodations

More common fears...

Fear: I will do or say wrong thing

- If you do make a mistake with respect to language and etiquette, learn from it and move on.

Fear: I could break the law without knowing

- Try to remember the guiding spirit and intent of the law: *To ensure equal access and nondiscrimination*. More often than not, if your efforts are aligned with that, you will be in compliance.

What is happening in the disability community?

Self Determination

- People with disabilities planning their own lives and pursuing what is important to them

Independence & Productivity

- People with disabilities becoming less dependent and more productive members of society

Including people with disabilities in volunteerism and employment is critical to the success of these goals

Everyone benefits from Inclusion!

People with disabilities benefit from...

- An opportunity to serve in an inclusive and supportive environment
- An opportunity to give back rather than receive services, leading to a sense of empowerment
- New skills, attitudes, and experiences that will make a difference in current and future careers
- Personal development and chances for networking

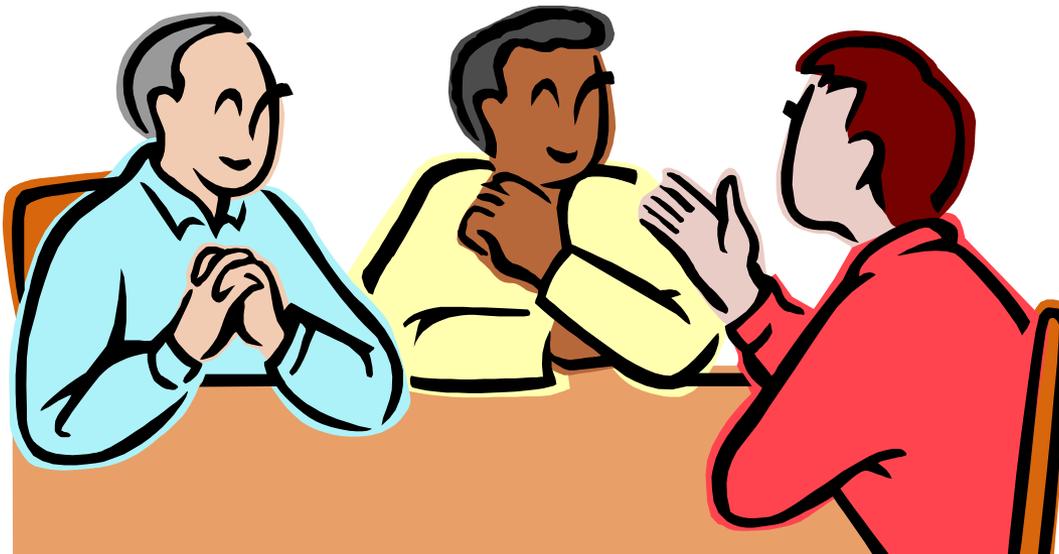
Everyone benefits from Inclusion!

One National Service member with a disability states,

“What I gave came back ten-fold...I was finally able to give back some of the love and nurturing that I got as a child.”

Did you know?

The DuPont survey (1990) found 90% of employees with disabilities rated average or better in job performance



Everyone benefits from Inclusion!

Organizations and the communities they serve

- Organizations with members and volunteers with disabilities more accurately reflect their community, as it is estimated that 1 in 5 Americans has some kind of disability
- Programs benefit from a diverse membership, which can attract more service users and bring additional attention from funders
- Some accommodations made for members with disabilities can benefit the entire organization

Everyone benefits from Inclusion!

Organizations and the communities they serve

- Organizations using volunteers with disabilities are often found to be more creative and innovative
- It's the right thing to do. *Everyone has something to contribute.*

Everyone benefits from Inclusion!

AmeriCorps program representatives state,

“Our member with a disability gave us an opportunity to acknowledge their specific disability, and disabilities in general. We also learned how to reach out.”

"Because of her disability, I adjusted the format of our team meetings to fit her learning style. This not only helped her follow along, but it significantly increased the functionality and efficiency of our meetings. **Everyone benefited from what started as an accommodation.**"

Accommodations

Effective accommodations remove a workplace barrier and provide equal opportunity to



- apply for a position
- perform the essential functions of a position
- to gain equal access to a benefit or privilege of employment

Accommodation Process

Accommodations can include:

- Modifying work schedules
- Reassigning marginal job duties
- Linking members/volunteers with disabilities with other members/volunteers, or “natural supports”
- Software programs such as screen readers
- Making existing facilities accessible to persons with disabilities

Keep in mind, accommodation needs may change over time

Accommodation Process

- Accommodations are made to level the field, not to give special treatment
- Members and volunteers with disabilities are held to the same performance and conduct standards as all members and volunteers
- The accommodation process usually only requires open dialogue, flexibility, and creativity from all parties involved

Accommodation Process

- If an individual cannot perform essential functions of the position, *with or without reasonable accommodations*, s/he is not qualified for the position
- You are required to provide reasonable, not *unreasonable*, accommodations
- More than half of reasonable accommodations cost nothing at all

Accommodation vs. Accessibility

- An **accommodation** is any device, technology, service, or change in programs, policies, or the built environment that is provided, generally *after* a barrier has been encountered, to a person with a disability to support them in their service
- **Accessibility** implies *forethought*, and asks, “What is the widest possible range of needs that might be present, and how can we prepare for them?”
 - An environment, product, or activity is accessible when it is easy to approach, enter, operate, participate in, and/or use safely and with dignity by every individual

Disclosure of Disability

A member or volunteer may disclose a disability

- To request an accommodation

A specific diagnosis is *not* required, although supervisors may request documentation from a physician indicating the need for an accommodation

- To alert supervisors to a potential/future need for accommodation
- To demonstrate personal abilities and adaptability

Someone may choose *not* to disclose because

- He or she may not require an accommodation
- Previous disclosure experience may have been negative

Disclosure of Disability

Does it matter *when* a member discloses a disability?

- Early disclosure is recommended in order to give members/volunteers and their supervisors ample time to identify any accommodations that may make the service experience more successful
- A member or volunteer may disclose at any time; however disclosing a disability during a disciplinary meeting does not exempt the member from any disciplinary action that was to be taken
- No one is required to disclose a disability

If you are a member or volunteer with a disability (for ex. hearing loss, dyslexia, anxiety, depression), please consider disclosing your disability to your supervisor or HR Specialist so that you can discuss any potential challenges and how you may work successfully around those challenges

Disclosure of Disability

How can programs encourage disclosure?

- Create a welcoming environment from the start
 - Express acceptance of *and* enthusiasm for differences
 - Participate in awareness training and education
- Use “Inclusion Statements” on all program materials

Sample: “Program ABC is committed to the inclusion of members and volunteers with all levels of ability. Anyone who may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact Mr. Accommodation at [phone/TTY, email address] privately to discuss your specific needs.”

What if someone discloses a disability to you?

- Listen without judgment
- Assess the purpose of the disclosure and what is being requested of you. Is this person...
 - Reaching out for help or an accommodation, or
 - Sharing part of his or her life story
- Keep information confidential
 - You may only share this information with permission, or
 - If the individual poses a threat to him/herself or others
- Work with the individual to identify an accommodation(s) that will address any barriers

Scenario Activity



Communication and Boundaries

Person-first language

- “person with a disability” instead of “disabled person”
- “people with disabilities” instead of “the disabled”
- “she uses a wheelchair” instead of “she is wheel chair bound”

Communication and Boundaries

Other terms to avoid

- Victim
- Suffers from
- Afflicted with

Many people with disabilities want people without them to know that having a disability can actually be a *positive* element in one's life

Communication and Boundaries

- Treat wheelchairs and other assistive devices as extensions of an individual, or as personal property
- Do not pet or call to service animals in a harness



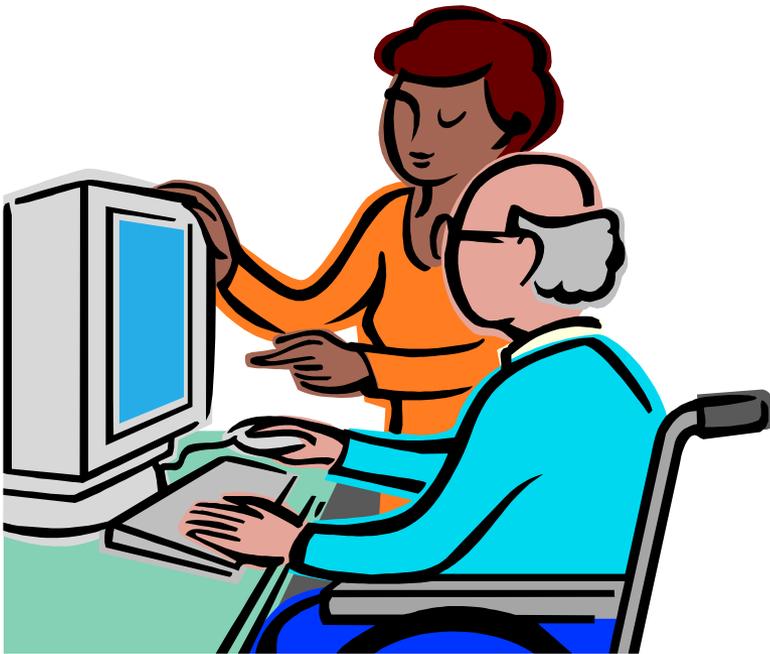
Communication and Boundaries

- Do not assume a person with a disability wants, or needs, your help. **Ask before helping!**
- Special treatment, particularly when it is not requested, can affect self-esteem, feelings of inclusion, and relationships with other volunteers or employees
- Having a disability does not make that individual a spokesperson for people with disabilities. Everyone has a right to privacy.

Communication and Boundaries

- Direct your comments directly to the individual with a disability, even if a companion or interpreter is present
- Use age-appropriate language when speaking to adults with intellectual or psychiatric disabilities
- When interacting with an individual who has difficulty with attention or short-term memory, use short sentences and maintain eye contact

Recruitment



- Let disability organizations know that you want to engage the abilities of people with disabilities
- Include welcoming language and positive, active images of people with disabilities in promotional materials
- Be specific about service and volunteer opportunities available

Recruitment

Provide Access

- Provide a TTY (Teletypewriter) for individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing, or who have speech impairments
- Include a statement on all materials indicating that you will provide alternate formats of any materials if requested

Include an Inclusion Statement on all published materials

- Example: “(Organization) is committed to the inclusion of employees and volunteers with all levels of ability. Anyone who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact (name of contact person) at (telephone/TTY number) privately to discuss your specific needs.”

Additional Resources

Subscribe to the National Service Inclusion Project listserv for useful information

http://lists.etr.org/read/all_forums/subscribe?name=disabilitylist

Contact the listserv administrator with any questions.

Steve Soskin
1-800-860-2684
steves@etr.org

Additional Resources

<http://janweb.icdi.wvu.edu/>

- Workplace accommodation solutions; check out the “Toolbox”

<http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/accommodation.html>

- Small employers and the accommodation process

<http://nationalserviceresources.org/epicenter/>

- Effective (best) practices for national service programs

<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/cguide.htm#anchor65610>

- A guide to Disability Rights Laws

Additional Resources

<http://www.serviceandinclusion.org/>

- Website of the National Service Inclusion Project

<http://www.ssa.gov/work/ResourcesToolkit/redbook.html>

- Employment support for SSDI/SSI beneficiaries

<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/508/508law.html> and
<http://www.section508.gov/>

- Accessibility of electronic and information technology

<http://www.atohio.org/>

- Assistive technology solutions for Ohioans with disabilities

Contact Info

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