Effectively Supporting Your Staff Throughout the Community

New England Business Associates Springfield, MA
• Since 1983 - programs include supported employment, self-employment, job skills training, and post-secondary education.

• Programs working with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities have always been community based, individualized, competitive employment placement.

• Current programs covering 4 counties in MA, and 5 counties in CT = approx. 6,619 square miles

• In individualized supported employment we currently serve approx. 150 people
Preparing staff (even before we know them)

• Hiring and selecting - Previous experience has broad definitions and is narrowed down depending on what program is hiring, the participants needing support, etc.

• Questions in phone screen and interview:
  • Behaviorally based
  • Designed to look for ability to work independently (doesn’t always mean DD experience)
  • Group interview
  • ALL staff are job developers

What do they need to be ready?
  Attitude
  Responsibility
New Staff - Onboarding and Training

• Understanding role of employment consultant

• Focus of initial training is on finding natural supports, learning about the company as a whole

• Heavy emphasis on shadowing and a gradual fade of peer support (just like our services!)

• Professional development training is expected to be ongoing, a staff member never “finishes” all must maintain a certain number of hour of training in order to advance

• WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH COMMUNITY SUPPORT? It sets the standard that this job is never done and hold an expectation of autonomy in the staff member.

  • Job Development is not a strict recipe •
Schedules and Communication – The Day to Day ...

• SCHEDULE - a living document with constant changes. Staff learn this on day 1, more realistically, they learn it in the pre-interview phone screen.

• This means we operate in a CULTURE OF COMMUNICATION employing all methods to communicate
  • email
  • text
  • office hours
  • weekly team meeting
  • notes from supervisor on schedule
  • sharing outlook

This is a team effort = all are responsible
Tools available

• Phone friendly atmosphere
• iPads
• Database and email available through internet
• Staff payroll and HR website
• Outlook, shared calendars
Valuing the role

Letting staff know we recognize achievements

• “EC levels” and growth
• Consistent reviews
• CESP bonuses
• Staff retreat
• Notes from supervisors

*Sharing a good news within the company*
Supervision and Feedback

• Quality Assurance ~ check in’s at employers.
  • Challenges = intruding on work environment, relationship with the employer, time

• Setting high expectations for staff.
  • Setting goals and quarterly supervision meetings
  • Timely reviews
When something goes wrong...

Problems – employer unhappy with your staff, staff unable to fade because of employer expectations, policy violation (our policy or safety policy of employer)

Case by case

Disciplinary action
Assessment of fade plan
Reassign job coach
Objective Investigation
Review results of group discussion

From group talk:
• Staff Training
• Team Communication
• Representing your company
• Quality Assurance
• Recognizing Achievements

Q & A
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