

Job Seeker Guiding Principles of Supported Employment

Below are some things you should know about Supported Employment:

1. Choice and Control

You have the right to ask for the kind of support that will work best for you when looking for and starting a new job. You decide what kind of work you want to do and the type of job that will be the best match for you.

Employment support will:

- Help you to decide when and how often you want to work.
- Help you to explore your dreams, skills and interests.
- Allow you to figure out what employment looks like for you.
- Help you move from one workplace to another if your current job is not working for you.
- Help you discover your interests and abilities by using a variety of different “tools”.
- Help you to visit different workplaces or test your skills in certain areas.
- Ask you for input on what kinds of jobs you have an interest in.

2. Paid Employment

When you get a job, you get paid. You should receive your pay cheques directly from the Employer or the Employer may deposit your pay into your bank account. Paid employment means:

- You will get paid for the work you do. It is important to know the difference between volunteering (where you do not get paid) and employment.
- You will get paid the same amount as anyone else doing the same job when they started. You will not make less because of your disability.
- You have the right to ask for help that will make your tasks easier for you and not have it affect how much money you make.
- Supported Employment is about being paid a fair wage for doing a job

3. Partnership

Getting ready for, finding and keeping a job might take lots of people helping you. You may have your family, Job Coaches, Employment Professionals and Employers helping you in the process, and you are all part of the same team. Everyone works together to support your career development and to make sure your job is working for you. You and your team work together to:

- Talk about your dreams for employment.
- Make a plan so you have what you need to be successful.
- Decide what supports you may need and how long you may need them.
- Make sure your team is listening to what you have to say in every conversation.
- Make sure you feel safe to talk about any fears or challenges you may be facing without being at risk of losing your job.
- Talk about your concerns and work together towards solutions that work for everyone.

4. Full Inclusion

When you get a job, you go from being a Job Seeker to an employee. The goal is to find inclusion at your workplace.

Social Inclusion

You have the right to be fully included at your workplace in the same way as any other person who works there. This means you should feel you belong and that your co-workers respect you as an equal. If there are activities such as parties or dinners for all of the other staff at your job, outside of the hours of your work, you should be included in those events.

True community inclusion includes employment. Becoming involved in your community will allow you:

- To be seen as a contributing member of society.
- The opportunity to be valued and welcomed by your co-workers and community.
- Get to know more people in your community.
- An experience of belonging.
- The opportunity to develop, pursue and achieve personal career goals.

Economic inclusion is about:

- The right to work and to earn a competitive wage.
- The right to spend your money where you want to spend it.
- Having the ability to look after your own needs – like paying for rent, groceries, bus pass and fun things you want to do.

5. Job Search

The right kind of support is provided by your team when you need it. The Employment Professionals should:

- Help you get a job.
- Acknowledge your skills, strengths and interests to lead to the best employment situation.
- Help you update your resume.
- Make sure you have enough time to feel ready to start a new job; you should not feel pushed into a position.
- Start the job search as soon as you are ready to work.

6. Individualized

You are your own unique person and the services provided by the Employment Professional will be developed just for you. This means that they will consider:

- Your personal gifts and strengths will be used in your job.
- What needs you will have to be successful (sometimes called accommodations).
- The job should match you, your skills and interests.
- Specific employment requirements you have (things like - do you like to work in a quiet place, do you like to work outdoors, do you like to work alone or with people around?).

7. Natural Supports

Natural Supports are the supports from supervisors and co-workers, such as mentoring, friendships, socializing at breaks and/or after work, and providing feedback on job performance or when learning a new skill. Sometimes you may need support to do your job. The amount of support you need will depend on many different things such as:

- Your individual needs.
- The job you are being hired to do and the tasks that are involved in that job.
- The amount of time you spend at your job.
- The other employees and their ability to be a help to you.

You should be supported to do the job to the best of your ability. You should have enough supports and things necessary (accommodations) to make sure this happens.

Some of the accommodations you may need to be successful on the job might involve:

- Equipment or assistive devices.
- Tools to increase your independence, such as a step-by-step list that breaks down your duties and how to do them.
- Flexibility in the amount of hours you work.
- A Job Coach to assist you in learning the job.
- Support from your co-workers and supervisor, such as having someone you can ask if you are not sure about something (mentor).
- Support from your family (rides to work, etc.).

Whatever supports or accommodations you require should be based on your needs, with you leading the process. As always, talking with your Employer and support people are important for successful employment.

8. Long-Term Support

You may need long-term support to ensure you are still independent at your job. You also may decide to change jobs at some point. Long-term support means:

- Support is provided on a case by case, as needed basis.
- No time limit is placed on support.
- Support may be provided for your entire shift or just the parts you are having trouble with.
- When you feel you can do your job without support they will be removed. Remember that the supports can come back in if you need them or want to move to another position.

9. Continuous Quality Improvement

You have a right to know how you are doing in your job. It is important that you know the parts of your job you are doing really well and areas that you may need to improve on. It is your right to ask for feedback and direction so that you understand the areas where you need improvement. You should:

- Be honest with your Employer and support people if you are having trouble with your job tasks.

- Ask for help. This does not mean you will lose your job; it will give you a chance to be more successful at your job.
- Do the job to the best of your ability, with or without support. It is your responsibility to look for and accept support when it is offered.
- Provide feedback on the ways you were helped to find and maintain employment. Your feedback is important to improve employment services for all Job Seekers.