

**TITLE: PLANNING FOR SUCCESS: ADDRESSING WORK ACCOMMODATION NEEDS DURING A TARGETED HIRING INITIATIVE**

**PRIMARY SPEAKER:**

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**Descriptive Abstract:** This paper will describe a process used by a large Canadian employer to attract, train and retain individuals with complex health conditions in jobs that are meaningful and productive. Specific strategies used to identify and address the candidate's accommodation needs during the pre-employment training process and on the job, will be presented.

**PRESENTATION DESCRIPTION**

Accommodation of individuals with a disability is a process, which involves creative problem solving with stakeholders as well as knowledge of key rehabilitation and legal issues. A large Canadian employer has completed many hiring campaigns to recruit individuals who have accommodation needs. Over the past two years the employer has utilized new tools/processes in an effort to improve the accommodation process and retention of the employees. This paper will describe the new tools/processes utilized, the benefit of using an independent consultant to obtain information regarding accommodation requirements, candidate feedback, and improved success rates.

The new processes utilized will be presented, including:

- Accessibility Audit – a consulting occupational therapist completed site surveys of all potential locations where the candidates may be placed on successful completion of the pre-employment training. The therapist reviewed the accessibility of the site to determine the physical, cognitive and sensory demands of working in each location.
- Job Demands Analysis – the therapist observed the job being completed, met with management and took objective measurements of the physical and cognitive demands of the job. The therapist also noted the sensory demands of the job and potential accommodation strategies.
- Interview with candidates – the consulting therapist interviewed each candidate to obtain information regarding their self reported abilities and limitations with respect to work. The therapist presented information regarding the pre employment training demands and the individual's

accommodation needs during the training process were identified. The therapist also provided each candidate with specific job demands information and discussed potential job accommodation strategies with the candidates.

- Functional Screening – during the third week of pre-employment training the therapist conducted a functional screening of job related skills with selected candidates, as required, to better understand their individual accommodation needs. Use of standardized and non standardized tools will be presented.
- On the job follow up – the therapist completed follow up visits with selected candidates on the job to ensure their accommodation needs were met.

Obtaining candidate consent to discuss their accommodation needs is considered essential to the overall success of the accommodation processes. Successful strategies used by the therapist and the employer will be presented. Practical strategies to improve accommodation of individual's with complex disabilities such as,

- mental health issues,
- cognitive impairments,
- chronic pain, fibromyalgia
- progressive disabilities, and
- multiple disabilities, will be discussed.

At the end of the session the participants will understand the processes that should be utilized in job accommodation and how to assist employers in ensuring that they are in legal compliance with accommodating individuals with complex disabilities.

TOPIC TRACK: *Success Stories, Case Studies, and Solutions for Stakeholders*