

A Guide to Employing **PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**



Health and Welfare Sector
Education and Training Authority
HWSETA

Foreword

As part of the skills development mission of the HWSETA, we see it as our duty to create an awareness of disability and how employing persons with disability could enrich the working environment, as well as the lives of those living with disability and their families.

In life it is often the persons with disabilities who get left behind, ignored and even victimised. Sometimes the classic reaction is “fright or flight”. We all fear the unknown. This guide however, intends to dispel the myths and tell you what the various disabilities are and explain how you can manage them within the workplace. This will add value to the lives of people with disabilities who may become your employees. This will mean a return on investment for your business, but more importantly, you will be investing in the development of society by treating persons with disabilities as equally credible members of society.

The National Skills Development Strategy makes particular provision for employers to take persons with disabilities into the workplace and to cater for their needs whilst meeting the objectives of their business. The biggest obstacle for an employer in embarking on such a dynamic path is the stereotypical misinformation that is spread about the challenges persons

with disabilities will experience in the workplace. The time has come for this obstacle to be obliterated and so to this end, the HWSETA is making this guide available. Through this guide, we also aim to ensure that the potential working colleagues of an employee with a disability are also informed and thus given the ability to themselves adapt to the needs of their colleague with a disability.

“Understanding promotes cooperation. Cooperation is the basis for team productivity.”

This guide hopes to provide the information and guidance required so that employers will not only be equipped, but also comfortable with placing persons with disabilities onto internships or placing them into permanent employment within their organisations.

“Education is the greatest weapon against ignorance.”

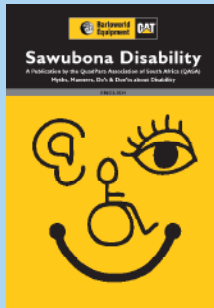
Content

Acknowledgement

Word for Word Media would like to thank the following people and organisations for their assistance in compiling this booklet:

Therina Wentzel-NCPPDSA;
Elizma Woods-NAPCP;
Hillary Lane-Western-Cape CP Association;
Karen Robinson-Epilepsy SA;
John Malherbe-Autism SA;
Ivy Masilela-SA Federation for Mental Health (SAFMH);
Philip Dobson-DeafBlindSA;
Ari Seirlis-QASA.

Sections of this booklet have relied heavily on content found in Sawubona Disability.



The HWSETA would like to thank Word for Word Media and the organisations that assisted them in developing this wonderful guide.

May this guide enlighten and motivate employers to offer internships and employment opportunities to persons with disabilities, across our country.

Should you require more copies of this booklet, please contact:

Tel: (011) 607 6900

Email: hwseta@hwseta.org.za

The Employment Equity Act and the Code of Good Practice on the Employment of People with Disabilities	4
---	---

Accommodation	5
---------------	---

Definition of People With Disabilities	6-7
--	-----

Confidentiality and Disclosure of Disability	8
--	---

Recruitment & Advertising	10
---------------------------	----

Interviews / Selection	11
------------------------	----

Conditional Job Offers	12
------------------------	----

Testing	12
---------	----

Termination of Employment	13
---------------------------	----

Employment Equity	13
-------------------	----

Employee Benefits	14
-------------------	----

Orientation and Initial Training	14
----------------------------------	----

Training & Career Advancement	15
-------------------------------	----

Retaining staff with Disabilities	15
-----------------------------------	----

The Language of Disability	16-17
----------------------------	-------

HOW TO HELP...

Wheelchair Users/ People with Mobility Impairments	18
Persons of Short Stature (Dwarfism)	19
People who use a Stick, Crutches or Walking Frames	19
Persons with Sight Impairments	20
People with Impaired Hearing	21
Persons with Speech Difficulties	22
People with Pyschiatric and Intellectual Difficulties	22

Autism	23
--------	----

Down Syndrome	24
---------------	----

Deafblind	25
-----------	----

Epilepsy	26-27
----------	-------

Intellectual Disability and/ or Mental Illness	28
--	----

Mobility Impaired	29
-------------------	----

Sight Impaired	30-31
----------------	-------

Contact Details of Disability Organisations	31
---	----

The Employment Equity Act

AND THE CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE ON THE EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

When people with disabilities are provided with opportunities and reasonable accommodation they are able to apply their skills and abilities and contribute meaningfully to the economy.

The Employment Equity Act, No. 55, 1998 is central to the creation of policies that result in equal rights for people with disabilities. It protects people with disabilities against unfair discrimination in the workplace and directs employers to implement affirmative action measures to redress discrimination.

A solid understanding of the Act, and a dedication to implementing the Code of Good Practice on the Employment of People with Disabilities (contained within the Employment Equity Act), will enable people with disabilities to have their rights recognised in the labour market.

Employers and employer organizations should include the Code in their orientation, education and training programmes of employees and trade unions should include the Code in their education and training of shop stewards and employees.

According to the foreword of the Act, discrimination against people with disabilities is perpetuated in many ways, including:

- Unfounded ability and performance assumptions;
- Exclusionary and limiting advertising and interviewing arrangements;
- Selection tests that discriminate unfairly;
- Inaccessible workplaces; and

- Inappropriate training for people with disabilities.

The Code is based on the Constitutional principle that no one may unfairly discriminate against a person on the grounds of disability, and is a guide for employers and employees on promoting equal opportunities and fair treatment for people with disabilities as required by the Act.

Failure to observe the Code does not, by itself, render a person liable in any proceedings. Nevertheless when the courts and tribunals interpret and apply the Employment Equity Act, they must consider the Code.

The Code is intended to help create awareness of the contributions people with disabilities can make and to encourage employers to fully use the skills of such persons. The Code helps employers and employees understand their rights and obligations, promotes certainty and reduces disputes, thereby ensuring that people with disabilities can enjoy, and exercise, their rights to work and at work.

As every person and situation is unique the Code speaks in general terms, thereby allowing for departures from the guidelines when justified.

Employers, employees and their organizations are encouraged to use the Code to develop, implement and refine disability equity policies and programmes to suit the needs of their own workplaces.



Reasonable ACCOMMODATION

The Act defines reasonable accommodation as “any modification or adjustment to a job or to the working environment that will enable a person from a designated group to have reasonable access to or participate or advance in employment”.

When employers reasonably accommodate the needs of people with disabilities it reduces the impact of the disability on their ability to fulfil essential job functions. Employers should also adopt cost-effective methods to remove performance barriers and provide equal access to the benefits and opportunities of employment. When evaluating work performance the nature of the disability may require an employer to adapt the way in which they measure performance.

Reasonable accommodation applies not only to employees but also to suitably qualified applicants and may be required:

- a. During the recruitment and selection phases;
- b. In the work environment;
- c. In the way work is usually done, evaluated and rewarded; and
- d. In the benefits and privileges of employment.

When the question of reasonable accommodation arises the employer should consult with the employee / applicant as well as technical experts (where reasonable and practical) to establish appropriate solutions.

When work, or the work environment, changes - or when an impairment affects an employee's ability to perform essential functions of their job - employers must make accommodations. These will depend on the person, the nature of the impairment and its effects, as well as the job and working environment. It includes, but is not limited to:

- a. Adapting facilities to make them accessible;
- b. Adapting equipment or acquiring new equipment (including computer hardware and software);
- c. Re-organising work stations;
- d. Changes to training and assessment materials, methods and systems;
- e. Re-assigning non-essential functions;
- f. Adjusting working hours and leave; and
- g. Providing specialised supervision, training and support.

UNJUSTIFIABLE HARDSHIP

An employer need not accommodate a qualified applicant, or an employee with a disability, if this would impose an unjustifiable hardship on the business i.e. significant difficulty or expense. BUT circumstances change! An accommodation that imposed an unjustifiable hardship at a certain time and place may be less of a burden later.

Definition

OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

DEFINITION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AS PER THE ACT

The protection offered by the Act for people with disabilities in employment focuses on the effect of a disability on the person in relation to the working environment, and not on the diagnosis or impairment. To this extent a person with a disability:

1. Would have a physical or mental impairment;
2. That is long term, recurring or progressive; and
3. Substantially limits prospects of entry into, or advancement in, employment.

*An impairment may
either be physical
or mental or a
combination of both.*

Physical Impairment means a partial or total loss of a bodily function or part of the body. It includes sensory impairments such as hearing and sight loss.

Mental Impairment means a clinically recognized condition, or illness, that affects a person's thought processes, judgment or emotions.

A Long-term Impairment has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least twelve months.

A Recurring Impairment is one that is likely to happen again and to be substantially limiting (see page 7). It includes constant, chronic conditions, even if the effects of such conditions fluctuate.

Progressive Conditions develop over time (worsen), change or recur and are considered to be disabling once the condition starts to be substantially limiting. A person who wears spectacles or contact lenses does not have a disability unless - even with spectacles or contact lenses - their vision is substantially impaired.

SUBSTANTIALLY LIMITING

An impairment is substantially limiting if, in its nature, duration or effects, it substantially limits the person's ability to perform the essential functions of a position. An assessment by a suitably qualified person is allowed if there is uncertainty as to whether an impairment may be substantially limiting.

Assessments to determine the limitations of impairments must explore medical treatment or devices that could control, or correct, the impairment in order to prevent or remove the adverse effects of that impairment.

Certain conditions are not considered disabilities. These include, but are not limited to:

- sexual behaviour disorders;
- self-imposed body adornments such as tattoos and body piercings;
- compulsive gambling, tendencies to steal or light fires;
- mental or physical disorders caused by current use of illegal drugs or alcohol, unless the affected person is participating in a recognised programme of treatment;
- normal deviations in height, weight and strength; and conventional physical and mental characteristics and common personality traits.



Confidentiality **AND DISCLOSURE OF DISABILITY**

Employers may gather private employee information for legitimate purposes, but only with the written consent of the employee. They may not disclose any information relating to a person's disability without the written consent of the employee, unless legally required to.

Employers must protect the confidentiality of disclosed information by taking care to keep such information confidential and separate from general personnel records. When the information is no longer required, it must be destroyed.

DISCLOSURE

Employees may keep their disability status confidential. Where an employer is unaware of a need they are not obliged to provide reasonable accommodation. The employer must still not discriminate unfairly, directly or indirectly against job applicants.

Where a disability is not evident the employer may require the employee to confirm the disability, and accommodating needs, and may request that the employee be tested, at the expense of the employer. Results should be interpreted by a competent person. Any further information must be relevant to the post and its essential functions.

Employers may not reveal an employee's disability, unless it is required for health and safety reasons but may, after consulting the employee, advise relevant staff of reasonable accommodation needs.





Recruitment & Advertising

When employers recruit they should -

- a. Identify the inherent requirements of the position;
- b. Clearly describe the necessary skills and capabilities;
- c. Set reasonable selection criteria for applicants, preferably in writing.
- d. Employers should create Application Forms that focus on identifying an applicant's ability to perform inherent requirements of the position.

Advertisements should be accessible to persons with disabilities and, where reasonable and practical, circulated to organisations that represent people with disabilities. When requested, and if reasonable, advertisements should be provided in appropriate formats, such as large print, Braille, or audiotape.

Inherent requirement details should be included in advertisements so that applicants with disabilities can make informed decisions.

Selection criteria may only be based on essential functions as non-essential functions may unfairly exclude people with disabilities.



Interviews

Interviews should be objective and unbiased and interviewers should avoid assumptions about people with disabilities.

If an applicant has disclosed a disability or has an evident disability, the employer must focus on the applicant's qualifications - not on the disability.

They should also, if necessary, make reasonable accommodations during the interview.

Interviewers should ask applicants to indicate how they would perform essential functions and whether reasonable accommodations would be required.

Selection

Employers should monitor their selection criteria. Criteria should not unfairly discriminate against persons with disabilities. The purpose of the selection process is to assess whether or not an applicant is suitably qualified for the position.

Subject to reasonable accommodation, employers should apply the same criteria to test the abilities of all applicants.

A person may be suitably qualified for a position based on any one, or any combination of, the following factors:

- a. formal qualifications;
- b. prior learning;
- c. relevant experience, or
- d. capacity to acquire, within a reasonable time period, the ability to do the work.

Employers may not discriminate against a person based solely on the person's lack of relevant experience.

An employer may not request information about an actual or perceived disability from previous employers or third parties when assessing whether an applicant is suitably qualified, without the written consent of the applicant.



Conditional JOB OFFERS

Employers are required to provide a safe and healthy working environment and should not employ or retain a person with a disability in a position that would create a risk to that person or others, if reasonable accommodations cannot remove such risks.

An employer may attach certain conditions to a job offer. These conditions include medical and functional testing to determine the actual, or potential, ability to perform essential work functions, with or without reasonable accommodation. (See Testing below.)

The employer may withdraw the job offer if the tests show that:

- Reasonable accommodation requirements would create unjustifiable hardship; or
- There is an objective justification that relates to the inherent requirements of the job; or
- There is an objective justification that relates to health and safety.

TESTING

Health tests, psychological tests and medical testing for membership of an employee benefit scheme, may only take place after an offer of employment has been made. Medical Tests must be relevant to the employee's work and the employer bears the cost. Tests must not unfairly exclude, or be biased, in how or when they are applied, assessed or interpreted.

Medical testing of an employee is prohibited, unless legislation permits or requires the testing; or if it is justifiable in the light of medical facts, employment conditions, social policy, the fair distribution of employee benefits or the inherent requirements of a job. Testing of HIV status is generally prohibited.

Psychological testing is prohibited unless the test has been scientifically shown to be valid and reliable; can be applied fairly for all employees; and does not bias any employee.

Employees may be required to submit to medical examination or tests before becoming members of employee benefit schemes. These are not relevant to a person's ability to perform the inherent requirements of their position.

An employer may not refuse to recruit, train or promote or otherwise prejudice any person only because that person has been refused membership of a benefit scheme.

TESTING AFTER ILLNESS OR INJURY

If an employee has been ill or injured and it appears that the employee is no longer able to perform their duties, the employer may ask them to agree to a functional determination of disability to determine whether the employee is still able to safely perform the job and identify reasonable accommodations required.

Termination OF EMPLOYMENT

If the employer is unable to retain the employee then the employer may terminate the employment relationship.

When employees with disabilities are dismissed for operational requirements, the employer should ensure that the selection criteria do not directly or indirectly discriminate against employees with disabilities.

Employers who provide disability benefits should ensure that employees are appropriately advised before they apply for the benefits available and before resigning from employment because of a medical condition.

Employees whose disability arose as a result of a work related illness or accident should be assisted by their employers to apply for, and receive, the relevant statutory compensation, including compensation from the Compensation and Unemployment Insurance Funds.

Employment EQUITY

An employer may not employ people with disabilities, or retain employees who become disabled, on less favourable terms and conditions than employees doing the same work, for reasons connected with their disability.

Employers should aim to recruit, promote and retain people with disabilities in all occupational categories and remuneration levels, as people with disabilities are often employed in low status positions and tend to be promoted less often.

Where employees with disabilities are concentrated in particular occupational categories and levels, the criteria for selection and performance standards should be adapted to facilitate other positions.

Employee **BENEFITS**

Employee Benefits may include medical, group disability assurance, retirement schemes and life assurance. Whether provided directly or through an external agent, the employer must ensure that they do not unfairly discriminate, either directly or indirectly, against people with disabilities.

Employees cannot be refused membership of a benefit scheme just because they have a disability.

Employers should offer benefit schemes that reasonably accommodate persons with disabilities including:

- vocational rehabilitation, training and temporary income benefits for employees who, because of illness or injury, cannot work for an extended period,
- financial compensation for employees who have become disabled and are no longer able to continue working at the same pay level.

Orientation **AND INITIAL TRAINING**

Company specific orientation and initial (induction) training of new employees should be accessible and reasonably accommodating of the needs of employees with disabilities.

Subject to reasonable accommodation, all employees must be treated equally.

Employers must try to include disability sensitisation content in their induction programmes and all other relevant training programmes.





Training **AND CAREER ADVANCEMENT**

All employees should be consulted in order to ensure input relevant to their own career advancement.

Facilities and materials for training, work organisation and recreation should be accessible to employees with disabilities.

Methods of evaluating work performance should identify, fairly measure and reward essential job function performance. Anything that falls outside of essential job functions should not be evaluated.



Retaining **STAFF WITH DISABILITIES**

Employees who become disabled should, where possible, be re-integrated. The employer should consult with them to assess whether their disability can be reasonably accommodated and, when appropriate, encourage them to return to work. This may require vocational rehabilitation, transitional work programmes and, when necessary, flexible working hours. Alternative work, reduced workloads and flexible work placement also prevents employees from feeling compelled to resign.

If the employee is frequently absent from work the employer should consult with the employee to assess whether the reason for absence is caused by a lack of reasonable accommodation.

The Language OF DISABILITY

Many incorrect terms and phrases are used to describe disability and people who have disabilities. However, people are becoming increasingly aware of the way in which the language used to refer to disability can reinforce negative stereotypes.

Certain word or phrases may give offence. Avoid using language that suggests that people with disabilities are frail or dependent on others or that makes people with disabilities objects of pity, such as “suffers from” or “a victim of”.

Although there are no concrete rules, it is helpful to understand why some terms are preferred to others:

Don't use:	Rather use:
Handicapped, crippled, physically challenged, differently abled, an invalid, the disabled	Disabled people or people with a disability, persons with disabilities, disability, impairment
A paraplegic, a quadriplegic, an albino, a mongol	Person with paraplegia/ quadriplegia/ albinism/ Down Syndrome
Sipho suffers from cerebral palsy Sipho is a victim of cerebral palsy	Sipho is a person with cerebral palsy Sipho has cerebral palsy
Wheelchair bound or confined to a wheelchair	Wheelchair user or uses a wheelchair
Deaf and dumb, deaf mute The Deaf	Person is deaf or has a hearing impairment Deaf sign language user Deaf people, People with hearing impairments
Vision impaired The Blind	Person is blind, visually impaired, sight impaired or partially sighted Blind people or people with visual impairments
Crazy, mental, lunatic, insane, mentally ill, nutter, psycho, schizo	Person with a mental health problem Person with a psychiatric disability
Mentally challenged, mentally retarded, brain damaged	Person with an intellectual disability or person with a mental disability
Dumb, stupid, slow, retarded	Person with dyslexia or with a learning difficulty
Dwarf or midget	Person of short stature
Deformed, deformity, birth defect	Person born without limbs or with a congenital disability



GROUP terminology	
Don't use:	Rather use:
The disabled	People (or persons) with disabilities
Disabled rights	The disability rights movement
Disabled community	Disability community
The disabled residents	Residents who have disabilities

FACILITIES terminology	
Don't use:	Rather use:
Special bathroom or paraplegic bathroom	Accessible bathroom
The term "special" implies segregation and has negative associations	
Disabled parking	Accessible Parking
Disabled seating	Seating for viewers using wheelchairs/ Accessible seating
Accessible facilities can be used by anyone; they are not special, separate or different. Universal design provides for environments and items to suit the needs of ALL human beings.	

How to help...

Wheelchair Users

& PEOPLE WITH MOBILITY IMPAIRMENTS

COMMUNICATE

- Speak directly to the person using a wheelchair and make eye contact. Do not stare at the wheelchair.
- Offer a physical gesture, such as a hand-shake even if the person has very limited use of their arms and hands.
- When speaking to someone in a wheelchair, put yourself at their eye level, by sitting or lowering yourself – this will eliminate the wheelchair user's neck getting stiff.
- If the person using a wheelchair is accompanied by a caregiver, make sure you speak to the person directly, and not to the caregiver.
- Never slap a person using a wheelchair on the back or thigh as a goodwill gesture. This can cause the person to lose their balance, or trigger muscle spasms and can lead to them falling out of their wheelchair.
- When appropriate, a hug is acceptable, a touch is permissible, a smile is agreeable.
- Don't be sensitive about using words like "walking" or "running". People using wheelchairs use the same words.

RESPECT PERSONAL SPACE

- Do not lean on or be overly familiar with a person's wheelchair – it is an extension of their personal space.
- It is considered rude to hang your items such as coats and bags on a person's wheelchair.
- Never push a person's wheelchair without their consent.

OFFER TO HELP

- Always ask the person if they would like assistance before you help. Should they accept, ask them how they want to be assisted before going further.
- When handing items to the person, place them well within the person's grasp.

PARKING

- Don't park your car in a space that is designated an accessible parking place. These spaces are wider than usual (3500mm) in order to get wheelchairs in and out of the car and are close to the entrance for those who cannot push far.



How to help...

Persons of Short STATURE (DWARFISM)

COMMUNICATE

- Communication can be easier when people are at the same level, so step back or kneel down to make eye contact with the person.
- Don't talk down to the person or be over familiar. The same courtesy and respect is required as when meeting any other person for the first time.
- If the person is accompanied by a friend, colleague or family member, address the person directly and not the companion.

ETIQUETTE

- Do not assume a person's age or ability based on their height.
- Place items within the person's reach.
- Never pet the person on the head.
- Jokes about Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs are not funny.

OFFER TO HELP

- Do not offer to pick the person up if they can't reach an object. Just pass the object or provide a step stool so they can reach it themselves.
- Ask before putting a cushion on the chair. A loose cushion may make it difficult for a person of short stature to get onto the chair.
- Always ask the person if they would like assistance before helping. Should they accept, ask them how they want to be assisted before going further.

How to help...

People Who Use A STICK, CRUTCHES OR WALKING FRAMES

RESPECT PERSONAL SPACE

- Items such as walking frames, crutches and canes are considered extensions of a user's personal space, so ask permission before you touch or move them.

OFFER TO HELP

- Always offer a seat. Also, offer to open doors as this may be difficult for the person to do.
- Be helpful, but make sure your offer is accepted before assisting with bags or other items and belongings.
- Ask the person whether they prefer a chair with arm rests or, perhaps, a higher seat.

How to help...

Persons with SIGHT IMPAIRMENTS

COMMUNICATE

- When approaching a person with a visual impairment, speak to them, so that they know someone is coming their way.
- Identify yourself clearly in case they do not recognise your voice but remember: it is not necessary to shout.
- Address a person with a visual impairment directly, and not through a third person.
- When introducing yourself, ask “shall we shake hands?” instead of taking them by surprise when you grasp their hand.
- Some people with visual impairments have a guide dog. These are not pets and should not be made a fuss of. They are working dogs with an important function and should not overshadow the person with the disability.
- When offering the person a seat, place their hand on the arm or back of the chair and let them sit down by themselves.
- When entering a vehicle, explain which way the vehicle is facing and place the person’s hand on the roof above the open door.
- When using public transport, such as a train or bus, enter ahead of the person. Never push them in front of you.
- At meals, a person with a visual impairment will manage independently or will ask for assistance.

ETIQUETTE

OFFER TO HELP

- Being helpful is much appreciated. The best approach is to ask how you can be of help. Give verbal clues, such as “May I offer you an arm” or “May I take your bag for you” to avoid taking the person by surprise.
- When entering an unfamiliar area, give a brief description of the layout.
- When approaching stairs, give advance warning and say whether the steps go up or down.
- Do not leave a person with a visual impairment talking to an empty space. Tell them before you move away and gently announce yourself on returning.
- If you need to move any belongings, ask first, then explain where you have put them. Check that they have taken their possessions before moving on.
- In a business situation, if you need to give written communication to a person with a visual impairment, make sure you have this available in other formats, such as Braille, large print or audio.
- Ensure that doors are not left ajar.



How to help...

People with IMPAIRED HEARING

COMMUNICATE

- Do not to assume how much a person can hear – ask whether they are understanding you and how loud you should speak. Find out the best way to communicate.
- Many hearing impaired people use a hearing aid and / or lip reading to communicate. In order to start a conversation, get the person's attention with a slight touch to the shoulder or move into their line of vision or give a small wave (do not exaggerate this).
- Always establish eye contact before speaking.
- Speak clearly so that the person can see and read your lips. Use a normal tone of voice.
- Keep your face and lips visible by keeping them in the light. Avoid standing with your back to a light as this will put your face in shadow.
- If you need to turn away, stop talking, so that the person doesn't lose the course of the conversation.
- Do not speak too fast and keep your speech clear. Do not speak in an exaggerated manner. Keep it natural!
- Use facial expressions that correspond to the topic and mood of discussion.
- Hand gestures can be useful. Use them as you would normally. Exaggeration is not necessary and can be embarrassing.

- Indicate unforeseen happenings e.g. a sudden loud noise.
- Keep sentences short and use proper sentence construction. Rephrase rather than repeating misunderstood words.
- Make sure that you have been understood – don't be afraid to ask. It is better to ask whether they understand or whether they need help, rather than to assume.
- Do not raise your voice too much, and never shout, especially in sensitive discussions. If you can't make yourself understood, write it down or find a sign language interpreter.
- When communicating via a sign language interpreter do not address the interpreter.

ETIQUETTE

- Do not smoke, chew gum or let your hair cover your face whilst in conversation, as this will make it difficult to read your lips.
- Do not look away as this denotes the end of the conversation.
- Keep background noise to a minimum, in order to help them hear more clearly.
- You may sometimes have to speak loudly to allow the person to hear. Always respect the person's privacy and suggest moving to a quiet corner or a private area when discussing sensitive information.
- Never tap or hit the person to get their attention.



How to help...

Persons with SPEECH DIFFICULTIES

COMMUNICATE

- The key to effectively communication is to focus on what they are saying, as you would any other person – don't focus on how they speak.
- Patience is important, so show this in your voice and body language. However, don't be condescending or exaggerate your encouragement.
- Do not correct the person or finish their sentences. You may know what they are trying to say but this disempowers them. Let them speak for themselves.
- Ask one question at a time. If a question requires a complex answer, break it up into single points that require short answers.
- Speak clearly and at a calm pace. Do not speak in an exaggerated slow way.
- Honesty is the best policy. Don't pretend to understand what the person has said in order to make them feel better. Apologise and ask them to repeat what they have said.
- To ensure that you understood correctly, repeat what you think they said, and ask whether this is correct.

Psychiatric and INTELLECTUAL DIFFICULTIES

COMMUNICATE

- People with psychiatric disabilities don't necessarily have an intellectual disability. Do not assume they won't understand you.
- Communicate with the person normally, and don't make any assumptions as to what they will or won't understand.
- A patient attitude is important, but don't be patronising. Keep your conversation clear and straight-forward.
- Avoid complex words and terminology.
- Try rephrasing questions to see if you still get the same response.
- When necessary, use communication aids such as symbols or pictures.

ETIQUETTE

- Be accepting, understanding and supportive.
- Be patient, and don't put the person under pressure to answer your questions quickly.
- Try to eliminate causes of stress such as crowded rooms, flashing lights, loud noise and music.
- If the person has a caregiver, revert to them as a last resort.

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) describes a range of conditions that affect the way a person sees the world, processes information and interacts with other people. People with an ASD typically find it difficult to develop social relationships, communicate with others and think in the abstract.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

Knowledge of ASD and empathy for the difficulties that the person may experience, including sensory issues and appropriate task and considered skill-set matching, will assist in enabling and empowering the person.

RECRUITMENT

Minor adjustments (see below) will help candidates with an ASD to apply for jobs, and enable them to demonstrate their skills as potential employees.

Job advertisements are not always concise nor written in plain English. They should list essential skills, and avoid jargon and unnecessary information. The advert should be clearly presented, avoiding complex design. Try to be truly objective about what abilities and experience are genuinely essential for the job to be done well, and leave out any that are not.

Job descriptions often include non-essential skills such as ‘excellent communications’ or ‘good team player’ and many people with an ASD, who are aware of their potential difficulties in these areas, will not apply for jobs demanding these attributes even when they have strong skills that are directly relevant to essential tasks.

It is important to provide clear guidance on what information the applicant needs to provide on the application form, and to make sure that the form includes a space for applicants to highlight any help or adjustments they may require at an interview.

SELECTION

As interviews rely heavily on social and communication skills, candidates with an ASD may struggle to ‘sell themselves’, even if they have all the right skills. In particular, they may face difficulties with:

- understanding body language and maintaining appropriate eye contact
- knowing how to start and maintain conversations
- judging how much information to give – especially if questions are open ended
- thinking in abstract ways, or considering ‘what if?’ scenarios
- varying their tone of voice and finding the appropriate level of formality.

ORIENTATION AND INITIAL TRAINING

Sensitivity to the way people with ASD experience and interact with their environment should always be considered.

TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

An employee with an ASD is quite likely to take termination of employment personally and with extreme sensitivity. People with an ASD have an enhanced experience of anxiety and this should be kept in mind when terminating employment.

Down Syndrome

Employment for people with Down syndrome and intellectual disabilities is often referred to as Supported Employment.

Supported employment is a model that has been designed to assist people with developmental disabilities to access employment in the open labour market. Jobs are identified and matched to people who aspire to do such a job or the other way around.

Reasonable accommodation for people with Down syndrome and / or other intellectual disabilities is more in the form of assisting the person to be able to do the job such as a Job Coach. A job coach facilitates the process to employment in the open labour market for people with developmental disabilities, working closely with both the employee and employer.

Disabled people, and especially people with Down syndrome, remain in the low income bracket and access to employment is a major challenge. They are perceived as having no ability which leads to low self-esteem and unpreparedness to access opportunities.

The Bill of Rights found in Chapter 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (No. 108 of 1996), has a human rights approach towards addressing discrimination against disabled people. Despite this strong rights approach, the reality is that youth with Down syndrome and other intellectual disabilities are still finding it very difficult to access education and employment.

It is common practice for people with Down syndrome to be placed in segregated settings such as special schools, which are not known to sufficiently equip them with

the necessary skills that prepare them for employment in the open labour market. This contributes to, and results in, many being placed in protective workshops.

Whilst policies that are important in assisting people with Down syndrome to overcome barriers and be employed in the open labor market exist, these policies do not always lead to them or their families knowing of, or understanding, their rights to be employed in the open labour market.

People with Down syndrome remain unrepresented in the business world. This is mostly due to the fact that businesses and service providers do not see people with Down syndrome as employable. They believe that they cannot obtain or maintain jobs in the business community (Wehman et al, 1998).

Through informal discussions with its members, Down Syndrome South Africa (2008) believes that, of the 1.03% of disabled people employed in South Africa, 0% are people with Down syndrome.





RETAINING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

**Always consider
retaining and
alternative
placement, as
going back on the
hard cushion of a
disability grant
must not be an
option.**

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

Deafblind people can easily be accommodated in the work place. It must always be remembered that one Deafblind person is never the same as another Deafblind person. Communication is the main topic here. A Deafblind person who still has some sight but no hearing will require a sign language interpreter and other means of visual communication methods such as large print and appropriate computer screen settings. Where Deafblind people still have some hearing they use hearing aids or cochlea implants. An induction loop system makes a big difference toward empowerment.

RECRUITMENT

The hard reality is that job offers to Deafblind people are very scarce and far apart. When recruiting staff there must always be consideration of the capabilities of a person. What does the job demand? Is training available or must the candidate already have the expertise? It must be remembered that, until quite recently, opportunities for Deafblind people were limited to protected workshops. The community is grateful to barrier breaking establishments such as the Mediclinic Hospital in Worcester who have recruited Deafblind people for some of the vital day-to-day activities at the hospital.

ORIENTATION AND INITIAL TRAINING

As careers in the open market are relatively new for Deafblind people induction, orientation and initial training will be vital for success.

DEFINITION OF *Epilepsy*

Epilepsy is a physical condition characterized by unusual electrical activity in the brain. There is a tendency to have repeated seizures that originate in the brain. The word “repeated” is a key part of the definition, as an isolated seizure does not constitute epilepsy. There are several types of epilepsy that are generally divided into two main categories, namely generalized seizures and partial seizures.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation for people with epilepsy is done primarily on a case-by-case basis. The person responsible for providing accommodations should discuss the best possible methods with the employee/applicant. Simple arrangements can be made to help ensure safety in the workplace and maximize the highest potential of the employee. Someone with epilepsy may not need all of the following accommodations or may need an accommodation that is not listed. Help from an outside organization may be needed. **Relevant considerations include:**

- What types of seizures does the person usually have?
- Does the person have auras prior to the seizures?
- How well are the seizures controlled by medication?
- Which job tasks will be difficult as a result of the seizures?
- How the job tasks are typically performed?
- Are there work related factors that could affect the occurrence of seizures?
- Are there times of the day when the person is better able to perform certain tasks?
- Are there potential workplace hazards?
- What are the employer’s contingency plans for emergency situations?
- Arrange work schedules to avoid undue sleep disruption. Allow a flexible starting time for someone with nocturnal seizures to accommodate the need to sleep late after a seizure.
- Install a safety device around machinery and place a piece of carpet over a concrete floor at the employee’s work site. Assign work on machines equipped with safety switches which turn off the machine automatically.
- Replace a flickering light (such as fluorescents) with a steady light source.
- Reassign any non-essential duties compromised by a person’s seizure disorder to another employee.
- Regular shifts, or working during daylight hours, reduces the possibility of seizures.
- An employee may require rest after a seizure and need the option of making up missed hours during evenings or weekends.
- Allow the employee sufficient time to become familiar and comfortable with the job and work environment. The stress of starting a new job may temporarily bring on seizures even in a person who ordinarily has good seizure control.
- Educate supervisors and co-workers on first aid for seizures and post first aid instructions in the work area. In some situations, having a “buddy system”- where a fellow employee is designated to assist the person having a seizure - can be help to reduce panic, confusion and lost time.
- Allow the employee to take their medication at required times, or work with their doctor to revise the medication schedule if it interferes with work. They may also require time off to seek treatment or adjust to medication.

ACCOMMODATION FOR EMPLOYEES WITH PHOTOSENSITIVE EPILEPSY

Replace flickering lights. Replace fluorescent lighting with incandescent or natural lighting. Full spectrum lighting can also be utilized. Reduce emergency strobe lights to <3Hz as anything above 3Hz can trigger seizures.

At the computer:

- Glare guards and/or tinted computer glasses reduce and eliminate glare and decrease colour intensity and contrast on the monitor.
- Ensure that the employee does not sit too close to their monitor. Reduce/ remove the blink rate of the cursor, or enlarge the cursor.
- Reduce the speed of the tabbing/ flipping window to <3Hz. Decrease the screen's roll rate.
- Mute the colours of the monitor.
- Provide a monitor larger than 15".
- A high-resolution monitor will reduce flicker as does an LCD screen.
- Workers at monitors must have regular breaks.
- Place a light between the monitor and the user.

MEMORY ACCOMMODATIONS

Memory loss can be a problem after a seizure. The following illustrates one person's challenge and her solution. A box packer would have absence seizures whilst packing boxes and forget what she was doing. She made a checklist of each step of her job. Now, when she has a seizure, she simply looks at the checklist to see what steps she has completed.

- For a person with epilepsy who has memory problems - put instructions in writing and allow time for recuperation.
- Accommodations for memory loss could include the provision of: a tape recorder for the recording of important information and meetings, a journal or diary, information cards listing critical information, cue cards, a telephone answering machine to record personal reminders. You could also teach the person how to programme meaningful and timeous reminders into their cell phones to remind them to take their medications and attend meetings etc.



Intellectual Disability and/or Mental Illness

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

Intellectual disability and mental illness are seldom evident. The greatest barriers to work place integration include perceptions, attitudes, myths and stigmas. The solution is to know and understand the disability. Intellectual disability may affect: memory, perception, speech, reasoning, decision making, problem solving and creativity.

MENTAL ILLNESS

- Know the illness and the signs and symptoms so as to be able to support and refer during a relapse.
- Allow time off once a month for treatment.
- Assist with time management to avoid deadline pressures.
- Give one task at a time with clear instructions and allow the person to do one task one at a time.

INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

- Repeat instructions, keep them simple, consider using images.
- Provide adequate information before expecting a decision.
- Be patient and listen well if there is a speech problem.
- Reasoning may be affected so assess tasks before assigning them.
- Perception problems may impact the grasping of facts and concepts.
- Memory problems may cause the person to forget instructions and guidelines.

RECRUITMENT

- Bear in mind that people with intellectual disability might not meet academic requirements.
- Adverts must invite people with intellectual disability and mental illness to apply.
- Intellectual disability and mental illness organisations can provide candidates.
- Persons with intellectual or mental illness can be trained on the job.
- Ensure that support is available should the person relapse, especially a person with mental illness.

CONDITIONAL JOB OFFERS

People with intellectual disability will need persistent reminders. People with mental illness require one day off each month to go for treatment, may need frequent, short leave to prevent stress or a long leave, especially in times of relapse.

TESTING

- People with mental illness could provide their medical and /or psychologist report which might assist.
- A person with intellectual disability may have an Occupational Therapist's report.

ORIENTATION/ INITIAL TRAINING

- A person with intellectual disability is easily tired and overwhelmed.
- A support person or social worker present during orientation and training may be beneficial.
- The trainer should consider repeating and simplifying tasks by using images.

TRAINING / CAREER ADVANCEMENT

- Trainers must understand the disability.
- A Job Coach would be beneficial.
- Try to cultivate an interest in career advancement.

RETAINING STAFF

- Educate staff members to change perceptions and eliminate stigma.
- Stick to reasonable accommodations for persons with mental illness especially in times of relapse.
- Offer psychological services to cope with stressful periods.

TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT:

- A voluntarily resignation could be a sign of relapse in a person with mental illness.
- Assisted with Disability Grant applications when employment is terminated.
- Request a relative or support person to be present when discussing the Pension Fund.
- Refer the person back to their organisation so they are not left destitute.
- Counselling services may be required.

The QuadPara Association of South Africa (QASA) is a firm supporter of sensitisation in the workplace, from the CEO down to the cleaner. Sensitisation raises awareness of the myths, manners, dos and don'ts around disability in order to allow an equitable environment for persons with a disability in the workplace.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

People with mobility impairments, and specifically wheelchair users, have generic and quite specific reasonable accommodation requirements in the workplace including:

- A desk at the appropriate height, space to circulate in the office (passageways should be clear of obstacles) and access to a window or air conditioner to prevent over-heating.
- Parking facilities which are undercover and close to accessible entrance.
- Unobstructed entry and exit through security areas. Specific holding areas for safety and security, in the event of an evacuation. The provision of evacuation devices, such as an EvacChair is paramount for safety.
- Access to power points to allow those using power wheelchairs to charge the batteries.
- Voice activated software enables persons with limited agility in their hands and fingers to be able to type efficiently.
- Wheelchair toilet facilities.
- As accessible public transport is generally lacking, transport could also be considered as reasonable accommodation.
- Some quadriplegics are accompanied by care attendant. Staff policies should allow for the activities of a care attendant.

RECRUITMENT

It is wise to consult with disability agencies in your municipality and province if you have employment opportunities for people with disabilities. The network between disability agencies is extremely strong.

Electronic advertising of vacancies is useful to people with mobility impairments who have access to the Internet.

Careful wording of advertisements is advisable. If you are looking for a person with a disability it is not wise to state that a driving licence is essential.

It is also inappropriate to specify a type, or level, of disability when recruiting people with disabilities.

The agency and/ or recruitment staff should always enquire as to reasonable accommodations required in order to attend the job interview.

It is not appropriate to question a candidate about their disability at a job interview.

ORIENTATION/ INITIAL TRAINING

All training and orientation should be integrated and accessible to all. It would be demeaning to conduct training sessions for staff with a disability in a session separate to everybody else.



REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

Examples of reasonable accommodation include, and are not limited to:

- Adapting existing facilities to make them accessible such as installing sound alarms on robot controlled intersections so that the blind could know when to cross, once oriented. A floor numbering system with braille inscriptions informs the order of offices on different corridors on the same floor; and the order of other offices either up or down stairs. These innovations make life easier for blind and visually impaired people navigating similar patterned buildings. Tactile flooring and colouring floors in different conspicuous colours also helps the blind and visually impaired.

Other examples include:

- Adapting equipment or acquiring new equipment including computer hardware and software. The use of text to speech software to read text screens is one such adaptation.
- An individual's workstation could be rearranged to make it more ordered to allow the person to locate where different things are located in a particular working space, be it an office or other.
- Fitting cupboards and shelves could help a blind person to create order and avoid the frustration that comes with misplacing personal and office items.
- It is also important to consider restructuring jobs so that non-essential functions are re-assigned, so that the blind and visually impaired employee can concentrate on the essential components of their jobs as presented in their job descriptions. The making of Braille or enlarged print copies could be assigned to a colleague allowing the incumbent to concentrate on the essentials of official business.

- The object of business is optimum productivity, not humbling one another at the workplace.

CONDITIONAL JOB OFFERS

Conditions for job offers should not be unreasonable and prejudicial.

ORIENTATION AND INITIAL TRAINING

It is important to give the person initial orientation to the workspace so that they can develop a good cognitive map of the space, and move about independently.

It is also important to give the new incumbent initial training on the job at their particular site.

TRAINING AND CAREER ADVANCEMENT

Equal treatment and equal access to training and career advancement should apply to all employees. It is common to hear that blind and visually impaired are under-employed at their workplaces. No matter how equitable a salary, assigning lesser tasks than someone is capable of is demeaning.

Adapting training and assessment materials or procedures (such as breaking the content of a unit standard into smaller skill areas) enables a blind learner to master the sub-skills and manage a long, intricate process. Training time could also be extended.

Such an example of consideration is found in computer literacy training where facilitators often implement task analysis, usually for newly blinded adults. Specialised training and support allows for the remastering of old skills in a different conceptual way (such as driving the computer using the keyboard instead of the mouse).

TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

It is prudent for an organisation to consult with experts in discrimination law as terminating the employment of an employee with disabilities could be challenged on the grounds of the process of selecting the person to be retrenched. The criteria could be arguably based on discrimination.

The method of executing the retrenchment could also be found suspect.

Any termination of employment which is prejudicial at law could attract discrimination related claims.

It is wiser for the employer to exhaust other possibilities than just developing a 'retrenchment-happy' strategy.



Contact Details of Disability Organisations

The QuadPara Association of South Africa (QASA)

Tel: 031 767 0352 Fax: 031 767 0584

National Council for People with Physical Disabilities in South Africa (NCPDSA)

Tel: 051 436 7497 Fax: 086 504 7138

National Council for People with Cerebral Palsy (NAPCP)

Tel: 011 452 2774 Fax: 011 452 6583

Cheshire Homes

Tel: 021 685 6169 Fax: 086 565 1667

Deaf Federation of SA (DEAFSA)

Tel: 011 482 1610 Fax: 011 726 5873

Down Syndrome SA (DSSA)

Tel: 011 615 9406 Fax: 086 136 9672

Autism SA

Tel: 011 484 9909 Fax: 011 484 3171

SA Federation for Mental Health (SAFMH)

Tel: 011 781 1852 Fax: 011 326 0625

Epilepsy SA

Tel: 021 595 4900 Fax: 021 595 4901

SA Nat. Council for the Blind (SANCB)

Tel: 012 452 3811 Fax: 012 346 4699

Disabled People SA (DPSA)

Tel: 021 422 0357 Fax: 021 422 0389

DeafBlind South Africa

Tel: 023 342 4092 Fax: 023 342 0088



Health and Welfare Sector Education and Training Authority **HWSETA**

Vision

The creation of a skilled workforce to meet the health and welfare needs of all South Africans.

Mission

The Health and Welfare Sector Education and Training Authority (HWSETA) aims to create an integrated approach to the development and provision of appropriately skilled health and welfare workers to render quality services that compare favourably with world-class standards.

Philosophy

The HWSETA espouses the philosophy of a better life for all through people development.

Objectives

- ▶ Develop and implement the Sector Skill Plan
- ▶ Develop and administer learnerships
- ▶ Support the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)
- ▶ Implement ETQA responsibilities mandated by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)
- ▶ Disburse levies collected from employers in the health and social development sectors
- ▶ Forge links with stakeholders and bodies in the health and social development sectors
- ▶ Account for the effective and efficient use of public monies received from levies collected from employers, in line with the provisions of the Public Finance Management Act



**higher education
& training**

Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

HWSETA
17 Bedford Road
Bedfordview, Johannesburg

Private Bag 215, Germiston 2047
Tel: (011) 607 8328 Email: hwseta@hwseta.gov.za
www.hwseta.gov.za

Cape Town Office (021) 945 3021
East London Office (043) 743 6075

Durban Office (031) 301 0223
Polokwane Office (015) 297 2313

PUBLISHED & COMPILED BY:

**Word
FOR
Word
MEDIA**

PUBLISHING • EVENTS • ADVERTISING • PR
Tel: 011 763 5790 Fax: 088 011 763 5790
eMail: wordforwordmedia@telkomsa.net
P.O. Box 675, Florida, 1710
306 Ontdekkers Road, Florida, 1709