Managing Your Career: Strategies for Graduates with Disabilities

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Module 3: Addressing Employment Barriers

Agenda

• Definition of Employment Barrier
• Types of Employment Barriers
• Effective Strategies in Addressing Barriers
• Resources to Explore
Definition of Employment Barrier

- The word **BARRIER** means: “anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability…” (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005)

- The phrase **EMPLOYMENT BARRIER** means: anything that impedes a person with a disability from fully participating in seeking, obtaining and maintaining paid employment

Types of Employment Barriers

The following are types of barriers that may prevent full access to employment (the list is not exhaustive):

- Physical
- Attitudinal
- Systemic
- Any other obstacles the prevent full participation in the workforce

Strategies in Addressing Barriers

1. You initiate the discussion about the disability
2. Come prepared with informed solutions and accurate information about your disability
3. Provide the employer with resources about your disability and accommodations
**Strategies in Addressing Barriers**

4. Focus on clear communication skills and explain to the employer your skills, barriers you expect to face, and how you intend to overcome those barriers.

5. Provide evidence of past accomplishments e.g., letters of recommendations from previous employers or honour's awards from school.

6. Provide the above information in a positive and respectful manner.

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**Physical Barriers**

Objects in the physical environment or the design of the building prevents a person from moving freely.

**Potential Solutions to Physical Barriers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier:</th>
<th>Solution:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Long walk from parking lot</td>
<td>Designated parking spots close to entrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only stairs to enter building</td>
<td>Ramps &amp; handrails put in place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floor is slippery or uses mats</td>
<td>Non-skid flooring</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Attitudinal Barriers
The opinions and feelings that someone may have about an individual with a disability

I don’t think he could do the same type of work as a person without a disability

Potential Solutions to Attitudinal Barriers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier:</th>
<th>Solution:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>derogatory language used</td>
<td>speak up when someone uses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>toward a person with a</td>
<td>derogatory language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disability is emphasized</td>
<td>suggest people use “person first”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and not the individual</td>
<td>language (e.g., “people with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>disabilities” rather than “disabled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>person”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thinking that people with</td>
<td>Always emphasize your strengths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disabilities are inferior</td>
<td>and not the disability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Systemic Barriers
Result from situations, policies or practices that exclude individuals with disabilities in some way
Other Barriers: The Disability Itself

• In some cases, the disability itself may present as a barrier to employment
• While accommodations can be put in place in order for an individual to perform a variety of job requirements, there are some occupations in which the requirements of the job can not be modified
• A specific example of this would be the requirement of a fitness test to become a Firefighter: if an individual uses a wheelchair this would be a barrier that could not be eliminated

Resources to Explore

Employment Ontario:
http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/employmentontario/

Ontario Disability Support Program:

Ontario Human Rights Commission:
http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/issues/disability

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005:
http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_05a1_1_e.htm

Contact Information

Thank you for reviewing this module. If you would like to provide feedback or if you have questions or concerns, please contact:

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References

