TIPS ON JOB COACHING

Presentation for Transition Summer Institute

3:15pm-4:30pm Breakout Room 1/ Oacoma & Wheeler Room

Introduction of myself and what I do

Finding a job. Talk about my first job.

Talk about how it must feel to go into a place where you don’t know anyone and start something you don’t know how to do.

There are so many changes since I got my first job and even the managers go about things differently.

Some businesses still do paper applications but most of them have a website, QR code or you have to text a specific number and it directs you to a link

Job service is changing… DLR has shut doors to walk-ins and closed many of the offices around the state in the last few months. You now have to schedule appointments.

Since COVID, many businesses are still struggling with needing help, but they don’t have the time to hire and train anyone. The managers are exhausted, and they don’t seem to even have time to chat with us about a possible trial period to teach someone skills. This is a prime opportunity!

Ask if there are things that are not getting done on a daily basis that you can have someone come in and do to “relieve the stress and take something off of their plate”.

Ask the manager if they had $10,000 to fix something with their business, what would it be? I bet it can give you ideas on carving a small job 4-15 hours a week. How many hours are you getting for your students?

Know your student.

1. Get to know them. Put together a list of questions that you can use as a general guide. This will help you get used to one another. Play 20 questions with them. Tell them about yourself too. Start that bond of trust with them.

What do they do in their free time?

Do they collect anything?

What do they do for fun in the summertime? Wintertime?

Do they like to be around a lot of people or work alone? Do they like loud noises or quiet spaces?

What sort of sensory issues do we need to be aware of when looking for a location?

volunteer work at the food bank, animal shelter or clean up a highway?

Do they like to go shopping or are they fashion gurus?

Were they ever involved in any organizations like 4-H or scouts?

What things do they enjoy doing at home?

Do they play any sports?

Do they do any chores at home and who taught them to do that? Do they wash dishes by hand or use the dishwasher, vacuum, change cat litter, pick up dog droppings, mow the lawn, sweep floors and into a dustpan?

Do they cook any meals and know how to use a microwave or the stove/oven? Do they do the baking?

These are all ways to find out what their strengths are. Most people love to talk about the things they love doing. They love to talk about their pets, toys, videogames, collections, and their fun times with family.

1. Does the student have any limitations?

Can they bend, stoop, kneel, have weight limits or do they need to be able to sit down?

Do they need assistance with doing online onboarding or training videos?

Do you know what it means for a business to be ADA compliant and are the hallways and spaces between racks in a store wide enough for a wheelchair to get through easily?

Accommodations are something you have to put into account when looking for a job but should never stop you from trying something new.

1. During the summer or after school… What does their week look like?

Do they have appointments on specific days that you might have to work around?

Do they have events like church on the weekend?

Do they follow a specific religion that doesn’t let them do certain tasks?

Are their family dinners that they want to attend every week?

Are they involved in other activities after school?

Do you only work with them during school hours?

For some people it is important not to miss their favorite tv show, even with streaming now. Do they watch football, wrestling or Nascar events on specific days or nights?

1. Communication: Find out if your student or client would rather text, call, or email information. Talk to the employer about this as well. Some employers will give you their cell phone number so that they can be in touch with you about certain things that might happen on the job site.

Find out how they would like to be contacted. This will make everyone’s life easier in the long run.

1. What does **work** look like to your student?

Do they know how to dress for the part? Do they like to dress up for work?

Do they need to wear a uniform?

Find out what other tasks they might be able to do and how they learn. Are they verbal communicators? Do they take verbal instruction well or do they work better with a list?

Do they get overwhelmed with too much information at once? Are they better with pictures of their tasks and can you take photos to create a sheet with tasks and simple words on it?

Can they count money and give back change?

Do they know customer service, and can you do role playing with them to see how they react to a good/ bad customer? Demonstrate this with someone.

Do they like to clean? Would they rather work in an office setting?

1. Do you know your community? I spent a few hours one day just driving around and making a list of businesses in our 2 communities.

When I visit a different community, I do the same thing. I need to know my surroundings in order to assist someone in obtaining employment that THEY want.

Sometimes there are businesses that you never even thought about working in before. I know a lot of the managers around the Pierre area, because I used to be one of them. I also owned a store downtown and was on the downtown association for a while.

Take a Saturday morning for yourself and just walk in and out of all the stores downtown in your community and ask to talk to the manager or owner to see what all they did to become an owner or what type of work they wish they could pay someone to do. These small business owners are the best ones to work with because they have worked really hard to get to where they are and they are likely doing it on their own. They are fun to get to know and usually the environment is positive vs a big box store like Target or Walmart.

1. Be careful when talking to managers and co-workers of a business. Remember that you are not in there to get a job for “someone with a disability”. You are not allowed to disclose a disability to anyone without the consent of the student’s guardian.

“I work with a teenager that is interested in working in this type of business and we work through a program called project skills at the High School”.

Don’t put that student in a box before they get the chance to prove themselves. Let them be the one to self-disclose and self-advocate. We have to teach students how to do this so that when they do transition to adult services, they are more prepared. I know many students that have helped run their own IEP meeting and that is awesome to see.

1. Did the student go through the entire process of obtaining the job?

Don’t just walk in and get it all set up for them and start working. Did they learn how to fill out the application and learn why it is important to have their social security card and ID?

Did they learn that this is important and private information that they should not share with others unless they are filling out legal documents?

Do they have 3 good references that they can add to the application and have they contacted those people to make sure they can use them as a reference?

Did you show them the importance of building a resume or a one-page profile?

Have they had to sit through an interview, and did you do any mock interview questions with them to explain what the expectations are when they are in that process? I have asked other professionals to do a mock interview for my clients. I will have the client dress like they would for any interview, show up at a specific time and then the stand in manager will ask the questions. It is a good way to get them used to talking to a stranger.

Some questions can be really complicated for people to process. Make sure they are ready for what might come at them in that situation. There are lots of ideas you can obtain online, use those resources. It can also be a great accommodation to get the interview questions in advance so that they have time to process those questions and have a better answer.

1. Prep for business… Who are the coworkers? What are the job tasks? How do you get to know the staff? Do they do a tour of the space they are working in?

Who is in charge of the shifts and who do they report to as a manager on duty? How do they request days off?

Is there a specific person they can work side by side with on the job? Are you their only support or can you find a natural support for them on the job? Have you introduced yourself to the team as well and explained why you are there? The last thing you want is a group of employees talking behind their back and wondering why the two of you are there on the job site.

Make sure the manager has an emergency plan if something happens and you are not there. I have heard too many stories of job coaches leaving the worksite and someone gets hurt. T

They are not employed by that business; they are being paid through the funds from DHS. Make sure the manager knows where you are or how to contact you or the student’s legal guardian at any given moment.

1. The student should feel that they are integrated into the business and that they are part of the team. How can you help them feel that they are?

Do they get invited to team events and meetings? Have you talked to the manager about making sure they are included in those things? The job is more than learning one set of skills.

Yes, this person learned how to stock shelves, but they also learned how to face the label forward and how to stack cans or boxes. They learned how to line things up appropriately and that it makes it easier for the customer to shop if things are tidy.

They learned how many items can fit in a row and then likely learned how to check dates on the product if it is food. Rotation is important and they are learning the “why” in this job. It is more than just stacking goods on shelves.