



Building Back Better: Utilizing Lessons Learned during COVID-19 for Inclusivity and Retention Session 1

Ms. Rickii Ainey & Dr. Ashley Volion
Thursday, October 14, 2021

This project is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of an award totaling \$137,500 with 0 percentage financed with non-governmental sources. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by HRSA, HHS, or the U.S. Government. For more information, please visit [HRSA.gov](https://www.hrsa.gov)

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Recording

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Have Fun

QUESTIONS & TECH HELP



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YOUR SPEAKERS



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**Building Back Better: Utilizing
Lessons Learned during COVID-19
for Inclusivity and Retention for
People with Physical Disabilities**

Ms. Rickii Ainey
Dr. Ashley Volion



Some Opening Thoughts

- We do not have all the answers, but this is a safe space to ask questions. We may not remember or get to everything. So, your input is important.
- You should always ask questions directly to the person with the disability if you are unsure about anything.
- Speak and act in the same manner as you would for anyone else.
- Do not correct a person with a disability when the person or people are referring to themselves.



What does the ADA say about the workplace?

- Under [Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act](#) (ADA), a reasonable accommodation is a modification or adjustment to a job, the work environment, or the way things are usually done during the hiring process.
- These modifications enable an individual with a disability to have an equal opportunity not only to get a job, but successfully perform their job tasks to the same extent as people without disabilities.
- The ADA requires reasonable accommodations as they relate to three aspects of employment: 1) ensuring equal opportunity in the application process; 2) enabling a qualified individual with a disability to perform the essential functions of a job; and 3) making it possible for an employee with a disability to enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment.



What are “Reasonable Accommodations”

- Accommodations are sometimes referred to as “productivity enhancers”.
- Reasonable accommodations should not be viewed as “special treatment” and they often benefit all employees. For example, facility enhancements such as ramps, accessible restrooms, and ergonomic workstations benefit more than just employees with disabilities.
- Examples of reasonable accommodations include making existing facilities accessible; job restructuring; part-time or modified work schedules; acquiring or modifying equipment; training materials, or policies; and providing qualified readers or interpreters.
- Many job accommodations cost very little and often involve minor changes to a work environment, schedule or work-related technologies.



Why should you hire persons with disabilities?

- We are reliable, capable and have high retention rates.
- Businesses that hire people with disabilities may receive tax credits or other incentives.
- We increase diversity in the workplace.
- We teach you a lot about creativity when it comes to getting tasks accomplished.



Recruitment of Persons with Disabilities



Rather than thinking about where to recruit people with disabilities, you should think about the following when hiring:

- **The essential requirements of the job, rather than how you are going to get there.** For example: If the job, requires you to meet with clients a requirement could be reliable transportation or internet rather than requiring that potential employees have a car.
- **Is the job information in a accessible format?** (To check document accessibility, Microsoft Word has an accessibility checker)
- **Allow for interview adjustments**
- **Connect with organizations that provide services or resources to people with disabilities.**



Retention of Persons with Disabilities



The best way to promote retention of people with disabilities is knowing how to interact with people with disabilities and keeping an open mind.



Building Flexibility into the Workplace

- Flexible work environment (For example, Working Remotely)**
 - If your worker has a caregiver that calls in sick, the employee will still be able to work from home and complete their required job duties.

- Flexible work schedule (For example, Flex Time)**

- Flexible breaks and working outside**



Enhancing Productivity for Everyone

Assessing office space for accommodation needs.

- Can the person navigate the space comfortably?**
- Are there any assistive technology needs?** (i.e. wrist rest, headset, battery-operated stapler and hole puncher, reachers/grabbers, dictation software, etc.).
- Are the restrooms accessible?**
- Can the person safely access the building?** (i.e. Are there automatic doors or door stoppers)
- Is there accessible parking?**



Creating Inclusion into Workplace Culture

You and your staff should be trained or well-versed in disability etiquette.

Creating positive office morale (i.e. Staff appreciation days and team building).

Regularly scheduled staff meetings to boost communication between staff members.



General Rules to Follow when Communicating with People with Disabilities



Rule of Thumb: If You Don't Know, Ask!

Image Description:

If you don't know, then ask me.

If you don't agree, then argue with me.

If you don't like, then say it to me.

But don't start judging me silently.

Written in black on cream colored background.

If you don't know, then ask me.

If you don't agree, then argue with me.

If you don't like, then say it to me.

But don't start judging me silently.



Don't Invade a Person with a Disability's Personal Space.

Some Examples are:

- Touching a body part without permission
- Touching a person with a disability's assistive device or service animal without permission.



Engaging with Persons with Disabilities



You Cannot Go Wrong with, “People First Language”

- People first language puts the person before the disability. (example: People with disabilities)
- However, some people with disabilities use identity first language.
- When in doubt, call a person with a disability by his/her name.
- But at the end of the day, never correct people when they are referring to themselves.



Speaking to People with Disabilities

- Speak directly to the person with a disability, not just to persons who may be accompanying him or her.
- Treat adults as adults. Do not patronize or talk down to people with disabilities. Likewise, do not lavish praise on a person with a disability for having the “courage” to overcome a disability.
- Be patient and give your undivided attention, especially with someone who speaks slowly or with great effort.
- Never pretend to understand what a person is saying. Ask the person to repeat or rephrase.

RELAX



Engaging with Service Animals

- Under the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), people with disabilities are allowed to be accompanied by their service animal in all places the public is permitted. Please don't touch, talk, feed or otherwise distract the dog while he or she is wearing his harness or vest because this indicates that they are working.
- Always speak to the owner of the service animal before interacting with them.
- Do not get offended if the owner asks you not to interact with the service animal.



Engaging Someone that is Blind or Visually Impaired

- When meeting the person, identify yourself and introduce others who may be present.
- Don't leave the person without excusing yourself first.
- When asked to guide someone, offer your elbow and allow him or her to reach for you, then walk slightly ahead. Point out doors, stairs, and curbs as you approach them.
- As you guide a person into a room, describe the layout, the location of furniture, and note who else is nearby.
- Be specific when describing the location of objects.



Language



Describing Disability: Mobility/Physical Disability

Outdated Language

Handicapped

Physically Challenged

“Special”

Deformed

Cripple

Gimp, Spastic

Spaz

Wheelchair-bound

Lame

• Respectful Language

- Wheelchair user

- Physically disabled

- Person with a mobility or physical disability

Source:

https://www.aucd.org/docs/add/sa_summits/Language%20Doc.pdf



Describing Disability: Blind or Visually Impaired

Outdated Language

- Dumb
- Invalid

Respectful Language

- Blind/Visually impaired
- Person who is blind/visually impaired

Source:

https://www.aucd.org/docs/add/sa_summits/Language%20Doc.pdf



Describing Disability: Short Stature, Little Person

Outdated Language

Dwarf

Midget

- Respectful Language
 - Someone of short stature
 - Little Person

Source:

https://www.aucd.org/docs/add/sa_summits/Language%20Doc.pdf



Describing Disability: Health Conditions

Outdated Language

Victim

Someone “stricken with” a disability (i.e. “someone stricken with cancer” or “an AIDS victim”)

- Respectful Language
- Survivor
- Someone “living with” a specific disability (i.e. “someone living with cancer or AIDS”)

Source:

https://www.aucd.org/docs/add/sa_summits/Language%20Doc.pdf



Sensitivity Training Video



Created by the US Government in Washington D.C.:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gv1aDEFIXq8&t=45s>



After Watching the Video...

- If you have experience communicating with people with disabilities, what are some tips you have?
- What did you learn from the video? (if anything at all)
- In terms of working with people with disabilities what are some of your concerns, questions or fears?



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QUESTIONS



Thank you!

Join us for the next session!

- Thursday, October 21, 2-3 PM ET Building Back Better - Utilizing Lessons Learned during COVID-19 for Inclusivity and Retention Part 2

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