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Anxiety Disorders: Accommodations and Case Management Strategies

Anxiety is a normal reaction to stress. However, for some people anxiety can become excessive, and while the person suffering may realize it is excessive s/he may also have difficulty controlling it and it may negatively affect his/her day-to-day living. Anxiety disorders are the most common mental illnesses in America and are clinically distinct from transitional anxiety experienced during events such as a wedding, moving into a new home, dealing with the illness or death of a loved one, or beginning a new job. Individuals with anxiety disorders may experience feelings of panic; extreme physical, mental, or emotional stress; and intense fear.

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) defines anxiety disorders as a group of mental illnesses that cause people to feel excessively frightened, distressed, or uneasy during situations in which most other people would not experience these same feelings.

Due to the highly individualized nature of anxiety disorders, symptoms can present in numerous ways and may significantly impact functioning. When not treated they can cause severe impairment and can negatively affect a person’s personal relationships or ability to work or study. In the most severe cases, anxiety disorders can make even regular and daily activities such as shopping, cooking or going outside incredibly difficult and can cause low self-esteem, lead to substance abuse, and isolation from friends and family.

A few common anxiety disorders and the core issues include:

- Panic Disorder: Characterized by “panic attacks,” panic disorder results in sudden feelings of terror that can strike repeatedly and sometimes without warning.
- Obsessive-compulsive Disorder (OCD): OCD is characterized by repetitive, intrusive, irrational and unwanted thoughts (obsessions) and/or rituals that seem impossible to control (compulsions).
- Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD): A severe, chronic, exaggerated worrying about everyday events.
- Social Anxiety Disorder: An intense fear of social situations that leads to difficulties with personal relationships at the workplace or in school.

The following accommodation and case management suggestions from the Job Accommodation Network and recent webinars presented to Job Corps staff may be helpful to students with anxiety disorders.

Accommodations:

- Provide written instructions
- Break down assignments into short pieces
- Record material or use previously recorded material
- Allow late arrivals or early dismissal
- Allow the student to take a break to use stress management techniques to cope with frustration
- Allow extra time during testing and/or test orally
- Provide preferential seating
- Minimize competition between students
- Develop a procedure to evaluate the effectiveness of the accommodation

Case Management:

- Schedule regular check-ins (students identified as having an anxiety disorder may not approach you)
- Refer to counseling and assistance programs (this may include the CMHC or outside agencies/organizations)
- Provide sensitivity training to students and staff
- Document changes both positive and negative in non-judgmental terms
- Develop strategies to deal with problems before they arise

**See Disability Resources, page 4, for additional information about Anxiety Disorders and other Mental Health Disabilities.*

ODEP Workforce Recruitment Program

The Office of Disability Employment Policy has developed a video series addressing various topics to help young people with disabilities navigate the job search process. The videos star young professionals who either have disabilities themselves or work with college students with disabilities. These videos are intended to reach individuals with disabilities preparing to enter the workforce and assist them in navigating the job search process. The following are brief descriptions of videos that would be helpful to Job Corps students. Please share this information with your career transition and work-based learning staff.

Effective Resumes: Tips on preparing an effective resume.

Using Social Media: Tips on the Do's and Don'ts of using social media.

Effective Techniques: Tips and tools to get noticed by employers.

Your Job Search: Tips about starting the job search and knowing what type of job you are interested in.

Preparing for an Internship: Tips on how to request accommodations in the workplace; the differences between an internship and employment; requesting accommodations in both environments; and, what to expect from an internship.

Skills for Success: Tips on ways to be successful in a job.

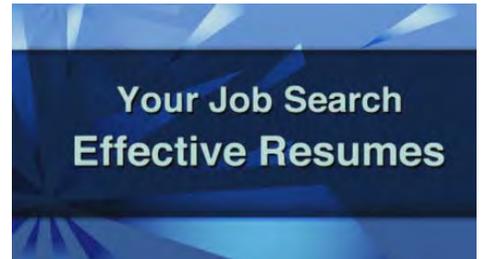
Professional Attire: Tips on appropriate attire for internships/employment.

On the Job Etiquette: Tips on the Do's and Don'ts of on-the-job behavior from arriving to work on time, using personal cell phones, internet use, etc.

Informational Interview: Tips about an informational interviews including ways to gather information about a potential position, ways to get your foot in the door, and how to advance in a career.

Disability Disclosure and Accommodation Request: Tips on when and how to disclose a disability, and when and how to request accommodations from employers.

**Disability Resources, page 4, provides additional information about ODEP and the Workforce Recruitment Program video series.*

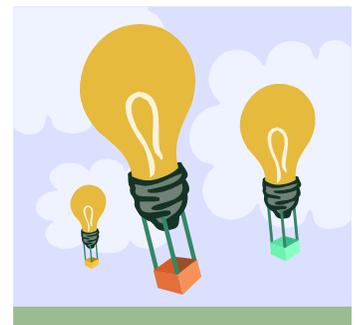


Promising Practices

Ramey: The CMHC and the Special Education Instructor/DC conduct hands-on workshops for students to promote disability sensitivity and awareness. The center also brings disability-related community organizations on center to provide staff training on interacting with students with disabilities and common learning disabilities.

Shreveport: The center has extensive disability resource support through their relationship with the Caddo Parish School District that includes tutoring, technology, and accommodation expertise.

San Jose: Career transition services staff provides students with a Career Planning and Transition Handbook, which contains information on requesting reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities.



Assistive Technology for Carpentry

Scenario: I have a student with a visual disability who is interested in pursuing career technical training in carpentry. What are some accommodations that can be provided to the student so that he can successfully complete his training?

Examples of possible accommodation include:



Benefits: Braille tape measurers are designed for individuals that are blind and individuals with significant visual limitations. The talking tape measure announces length or distance of the object that is being measured and has a memory mode. SpeakFAST is a compact system that captures data from the System 1000 torque wrench and converts it to equivalent speech output. The SpeakFAST unit is used in conjunction with a modified FAST Technology Series 1000 torque meter and sensor to provide speech output of torque readings.

Benefits: The braille large print protractor features a pivoting wand and is designed with bold large print numbers and raised dots. The LED screwdriver is designed for individuals with low vision, and features a multi-bit driver with six bits that are held in place by a magnet.



Benefits: Colored electrical tape can be used to wrap around the head of the hammer, which makes it easier for the student to follow the movements when hammering. The removable color dots can be placed on the head of a nail to make it easier for an individual with a visual disability to easily keep track of the nail while hammering. The precision magnifiers can be clipped on to any craft tool.



Colored Electrical Tape



Removable Color-Coding Dots



Connectables Magnifying Lens

Additional Considerations:

Below are some environmental adaptations that can be considered to help ensure safety.

Organize the work area: Gather all necessary equipment ahead of time. Important tools should be kept together.

Organize the tools: Organize tools by type and always store tools in a designated location.

Sufficient lighting: Ensure the work area has sufficient lighting. Consider having an adjustable flex-arm lamp that the student can adjust the direction of light as needed.

AT for Carpentry (*con't.*)

Interested in purchasing any of these products?: Braille Tape Measurer, <http://www.maxiaids.com/products/1276/Braille-Steel-Tape-Measure---25-Foot.html>; Talking Tape Measurer, <http://www.independentliving.com/prodinfo.asp?number=756565>; SpeakFast Torque Wrench, <http://www.compusult.at/at-website/our-products/speakfast1>; Braille-Large Print Protractor, http://shop.aph.org/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/Product_Braille-Large%20Print%20Protractor_1-04115-00P_10001_11051; LED Screwdriver, <http://www.firststreetonline.com/Electronics+amp+Gadgets/Gadgets/Lighted+Multi-Bit+Screwdriver.axd>; Avery Dennison See-Through Color-Coding Dots, <http://office.pricegrabber.com/misc/m/930579326/>; Performance W549 Colored Electrical Tape, <http://www.walmart.com/ip/Performance-W549-Colored-Electrical-Tape-5-Pack/15524227>; Connectables Magnifying Lens, <http://www.opticsale.com/carson-connectables-magnifier-attachments-cm66-397-prd1.html>.

Check out the Job Corps Disability Website for information how assistive technology can be used in other career technical areas.

Disability Resources

Check out ODEP Workforce Recruitment Program Video Series

<http://www.dol.gov/odep/wrp/Videos.htm> — This series of videos addresses various topics that will help young people with disabilities navigate the job search process. The videos star young professionals that either have disabilities themselves or work with college students with disabilities.

ADA Checklist for Readily Achievable Barrier Removal

This checklist (<http://www.adachecklist.org/>) is based on the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design. Centers use this checklist to assess the physical accessibility of their center, required as part of PRH requirement 6.11 R7(g). Information from the checklist is then used to determine simple fixes that can improve the overall accessibility of the center and becomes part of the center's accessibility plan.

Anxiety Disorders, other Mental Health Disabilities, Webinars and Accommodation Suggestions

JAN offers accommodation suggestions for anxiety disorders at <http://askjan.org/media/anxi.htm>.

Nami.org offers information on anxiety disorders at http://www.nami.org/factsheets/anxietydisorders_factsheet.pdf.

To review Job Corps Disability Webinars on Anxiety, visit the Job Corps Disability Website under the Trainings tab.

Upcoming Job Corps Disability Webinars

- Reasonable Accommodation Process
- Reasonable Accommodation Best Practice Series: Assembling Your Reasonable Accommodation Folder

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