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Job Corps Disability Support Newsletter

Spring 2017

Developing Disability Program Partnerships/Resources

Each center is required to develop partnerships and resources with outside agencies and programs that will assist the center in serving students with disabilities [PRH 6.14, R6 (a-c)]. Special focus should be given to developing resources and partnerships that can assist the center in identifying or providing accommodation support that promotes student independence and employability.

Disability Program partnerships/resources can augment and/or supply the following:

- Testing/Assessment services
- Staff/student training on disability-related topics
- Job training, development, placement, and retention services for students with disabilities
- Independent living/transition services
- Access and possible funding for assistive technologies and/or other supplies and services

Each center has been provided a Disability Partnership Tool and Customized Disability Partnership Tool (available from your Regional Disability Coordinator) that includes many organizations such as Centers for Independent Living, State Assistive Technology Programs, Bookshare, Easter Seals, workforce development programs, Goodwill Industries, and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). The tool serves as a starting point for developing partnerships and the Customized Disability Partnership Tool has done some of the initial legwork as it contains contact information for resources available in the area local to your Job Corps center.

One example of a potential resource is Bookshare who offers a free organizational membership to all Job Corps centers, and individual memberships for the students. Bookshare provides individuals with print disabilities access to digitized audio books for academics, Career Technical Training, job-seeking skills, transition, and pleasure reading among other things. Once established, students with print disabilities can take their individual Bookshare memberships with them when they transition from Job Corps to be used in continued education, training, and the workplace.

Partnerships/Resources (cont'd)

Building productive, lasting resources/partnerships takes time, and should not be the sole responsibility of the Disability Coordinators (DCs). It is a center-wide requirement therefore, a team effort is needed. Along with the Business Community Liaison (BCL), Work-Based Learning (WBL) and Career Transition staff may have knowledge of partnerships/resources that can help with job placement and transition services for individuals with disabilities. The Center Mental Health Consultant (CMHC) and other clinicians may already have connections to outside partnerships/resources that can provide extended services and supports for students with mental health disabilities.

The "Building Partnerships" section of the Job Corps Disability Website contains webinars designed to help centers build specific partnerships/resources to support students with disabilities.

The following are some examples of centers that have built strong, comprehensive disability-related resources and partnerships.

Phoenix Job Corps Center

The center has a strong ongoing partnership with a local office of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (VR). A dedicated VR counselor comes to the center and conducts VR orientation for interested students and assists with determining students' eligibility for agency assistance through assessments as needed. For qualified students, the VR counselor provides guidance, services, and funding toward their employment goals (e.g., job coaching, specialized computers, interview clothes, rent for 1st apartment, etc.).

Arizona Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Patricia Pozo, with a Job Corps student.

Gary Job Corps

At the center, the BCL, WBL Coordinator, Career Transition Readiness Manager, CMHCs and DCs are all involved in creating partnerships that benefit the Disability Program. One example is their partnership with Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS). Students are able to co-enroll in Job Corps and DARS, so DARS counselors can work with the students to prepare and assist with transition needs including job placement, acquiring assistive technology, and connecting to other community resources and programs. DARS has provided Gary Job Corps students with hearing aid batteries and training, and assisted a student with a condition that was causing her to go blind and deaf by locating a school for the blind and helping the student through the transition after completing the Job Corps program. Gary Job Corps also has a partnership with San Marcos Interpreting Services and has utilized their interpreters for students who were deaf or hard of hearing.

Pittsburgh Job Corps

The center has a partnership with Allegheny County which gives priority status to the Job Corps students with disabilities who apply for a job with the county. The center has also developed a partnership with Achieva, a Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funded non-profit organization that supports adults with disabilities by providing housing support and job coaches.

Partnerships/Resources (cont'd)

Roswell Job Corps

The center has a memorandum of understanding with VR outlining specific services that will be provided by VR to the center. Services include co-enrolling students with disabilities, providing on-site one-on-one meetings between students and VR counselors, attending regular progress meetings with center staff, providing assistance in preparing students to exit the Job Corps program, and providing support with job development. Roswell also has a partnership with Tobosa Developmental Services where students with disabilities attend Tobosa as a WBL site.

Tulsa Job Corps

The center has a good working relationship with Goodwill Industries. Students with disabilities have received forklift training, attended the warehouse program, and had different job training opportunities upon completion of the Job Corps Program. Approximately five Tulsa Job Corps students with disabilities have been hired and trained by Goodwill in the past eighteen months.

Effectively Managing Executive Function Challenges

Executive function is an umbrella term for the neurologically-based skills involving mental control and self-regulation. These "neuro cognitive" skills are important for adaptive problem solving, creative thinking, and goal-directed behavior, and are controlled by an area of the brain called the frontal lobe—often referred to as the "command and control center of cognitive activities." Some of our students at Job Corps may have damage to that area of the brain, or may have a disability or condition that may have impacted their ability to fully develop or use the executive function skills. Individuals who have a variety of conditions (e.g., ADHD, PTSD, Anxiety Disorder, Mood Disorders, Autism Spectrum Disorders, Learning Disabilities…) may have executive function skill deficits.

Key executive functions include:

➢ Impulse Control = Thinking before acting

➢ Emotional Control = Keeping feelings in check

➢ Flexible Thinking = Adjusting to the unexpected

➢ Working Memory = Keeping key information in mind

➢ Self-Monitoring = Evaluating how s/he is doing

➢ Planning and Prioritizing = Developing goals and planning how to meet them

➢ Task Initiation = Taking action or getting started

➢ Organization = Keeping track of things both physically and mentally
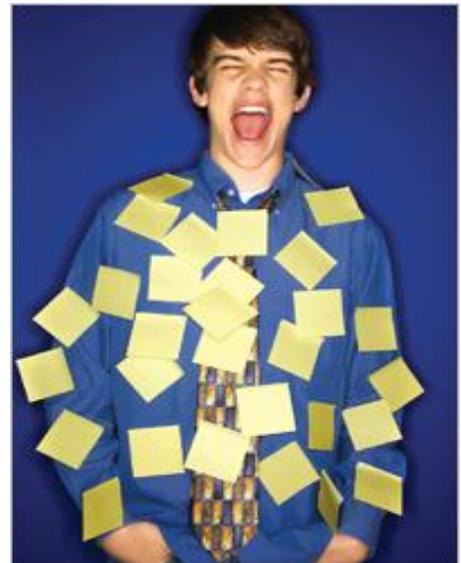
Executive function skills are developed throughout childhood and adolescence. Having opportunities to practice and use these skills have an impact on the individual's skill level development.

Executive Function (cont'd)

Understood.org provides easy-to-understand information about executive functioning, and what can be done to improve executive function skills.

Functional Limitations and Accommodations

The table below indicates some of the more common functional limitations related to executive function disorders and potential accommodations that can be provided to the student.

Functional Limitations	Accommodations
Impulse Control	Provide structured breaks; provide calm work space; peer mentor; review behavioral expectations and praise for compliant behavior
Emotional Control	Provide structured breaks; interact with student privately when escalating; peer mentor; allow the use of calming apps
Flexible Thinking	Provide more than one way to complete tasks/assignments; use games that test creativity, flexibility; support routine changes
Working Memory	Provide visual supports; chunk information; provide notes or other relevant learning content; repeat instructions and key concepts
Self-Monitoring	Model problem-solving; set and monitor goals with the student; provide positive reinforcement for self-initiation and monitoring; use instructional videos that demonstrate self-monitoring
Planning/Prioritizing	Provide prioritized task lists; assistive technology (voice recorder or apps for reminders, planners, calendars…)
Task Initiation	Break tasks into smaller segments; verify understanding of task; provide graphic organizers; brainstorm with student
Organization	Provide checklists, calendars, planners; set time limits; organization apps; demonstrate how to do "one thing at a time"

Upcoming Webinars

➢ Disability Coordinator Orientation Part 3: Other Disability Program Requirements

➢ Reasonable Accommodation in Career Technical Training: Easy and Practical Ways to Accommodate and Adapt the "Hard" Trades

Check the Event Registration page on the Job Corps Community Web site for dates/times

E-mail your comments or suggestions to:
Johnetta Davis, National Health and Wellness Manager
davis.johnetta@dol.gov

Disability Directives

➢ Information Notice 16-18: *Job Corps Disability Program Report: Program Year (PY) 2015* provides an update on the Job Corps Disability Program, including the population, services and supports provided, as well as comparing student outcomes between those students with and without disabilities.

➢ Program Instruction 16-23: *Disability Program Compliance Assessment Guide* informs the Job Corps community of the Disability Program Assessment Guide release designed to support center staff with their preparation for Disability Program Compliance Assessments, as well as to ensure compliance with Federal disability laws and regulations, and Job Corps' PRH Sections 1.4 and 6.14 requirements.

➢ Change Notice 16-05: *Policy and Requirements Handbook (PRH) Exhibit* 5-4: *Reasonable Accommodation and Disability Program Required Staff Training* updated Exhibit 5-4 to indicate the required reasonable accommodation training must be completed in the Job Corps Learning Management System.

Spotlight on AT: Executive Function

Below are examples of free iOS and Android apps that support functional limitations associated with executive function difficulties.

30/30 by Binary Hammer

Designed to increase flexible thinking and time management. Students can set up a list of tasks, and length of time for each of them. The timer reminds students when to move on to the next task. Students can use color-coding, icons, and share lists.

Relax Melodies HD

Designed to support emotional control. Students can combine sounds and melodies to create an individualized mix. A blog is available for users of the app to access tips on how to relax and better control emotions.

DropTask HD – Visual To-Do List

Designed to increase planning and prioritizing skills. Students can keep daily work organized in one place. Students are able to manage anything (tasks, assignments, events…) from start to completion. A visual map is available along with ability to collaborate with others across devices.

Regional Disability Coordinators

Boston: Kristen Philbrook (kristen.philbrook@humanitas.com)

Philadelphia: Annie Tulkin (anne.tulkin@humanitas.com)

Atlanta and Dallas: Laura Kuhn (laura.kuhn@humanitas.com)

Chicago: Sharon Hong (sharon.hong@humanitas.com)

San Francisco: Stephanie Karras (stephanie.karras@humanitas.com)