

**TransCen**

**Working Together to
Build Inclusive
Workplaces**

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Session Objectives

- 1 Understand the importance of *Work*, inclusion and belonging
- 2 Learn to assess company culture and identify ways to foster social inclusion at work
- 3 Learn to build professional connections and facilitate natural supports
- 4 Learn ways to address interpersonal challenges and include coworkers/supervisors in the process



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For People with Disabilities:
It has been a long road to inclusion & acceptance

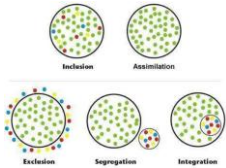


Image courtesy of:
ThinkINCLUSION.us



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Yet, despite our progress, many people with disabilities remain impoverished and lonely.



- 77% of people with ID/ASD are unemployed.
- 65%–79% Adults with ID/ASD report experiencing significant loneliness or social isolation.

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Benefits of Employment

- Financial gain, economic independence
- A more stable, fulfilling life
- A sense of purpose
- Feelings of self-worth and pride
- An opportunity to learn new things, contribute to your community
- An opportunity to make friends; a sense of *Belonging*



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Inclusion & Assimilation: *a sense of belonging*

- *Belonging* requires more than just being present.
- It takes active engagement with others in meaningful, goal-oriented ways.
- Job Coaches may need to foster social inclusion.

Ten Dimensions of Belonging



Image: Erick W. Carter;
Baylor Center on Developmental Disabilities

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Building Inclusive Worksites

Creating meaningful connections

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Job Site Analysis

- Assess the key characteristics of the workplace and work routines
- Look at PHYSICAL and SOCIAL aspects
- How will you address each?

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graph LR; A([Job tasks]) -- "+" --> B([Environment]); B -- "+" --> C([Supervision]); C -- "+" --> D([Company Culture]); D --> E((JOB SITE ANALYSIS));
```

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Critical Component: Corporate Culture

- What are the values of the business?
- How do people dress? Act? Professional vs. casual?
- How do people do their work? Teams vs. independently
- Level of supervision/feedback provided or available
- Level of structure/organization/points of chaos
- What are the unspoken social rules and the Level of tolerance?
- How do people interact/engage with each other? Level of socialization? Where do people socialize?

```
graph LR; A([Corporate Culture]) --> B((JOB SITE ANALYSIS));
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Understanding *What's Expected*

- At work, our social rules are different
- Workplace culture and expectations can be vague; a bit nebulous; change throughout the workday
- People with disabilities can experience high degrees of social isolation and limited work opportunities. Fewer opportunities to engage with others in professional situations. May need to learn critical interpersonal skills.
- Yet, coaching supports tend to focus on teaching hard skills, not soft ones.

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85% of employers surveyed said "soft skills," not technical skills, are the critical factor in job success.

Stanford Research Institute

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Sandbox or Soft Skills



- Manners, kindness and caring about others
- Self-regulation
- Professionalism
- Adjusting to change
- Decision making and problem-solving
- Communication skills
- Work ethic, motivation and teamwork
- Taking initiative
- Time and project management
- Personal Hygiene

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Fostering Social Inclusion and Teaching Soft Skills

- Job Coaching must focus on more than just job tasks and work performance
- Interpersonal skills are critical. Need to help people to learn the “do’s and don’ts”
- Identify ways the employee can “engage professionally” with coworkers
- Small, intentional acts of kindness go long way



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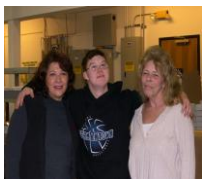
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Fostering Meaningful Connections and Professional Friendships

Starts Day 1

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Facilitating Co-Worker Involvement:



- Model people-first, inclusive behaviors (no special degree required)
- Encourage co-worker mentoring
- Ask supervisor/co-workers for feedback regarding the new employee's work performance
- Thank co-workers who take time to share ideas or step in to help
- Share tips for directing, teaching and supervising the new employee
- Assess (and teach) expectations and interpersonal skills

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Be the “Connector,” Not the “Connection”

- Do not speak for the person or intrude on conversations with co-workers; May need to start conversations, but then step away
- Teach the employee to “introduce themselves” and greet their coworkers
- Do not “hover” or “over-help”
- Make friends with everyone at the site
- Find commonalities between the employee and coworkers

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Normalize Supervisor/Employee Relationships

- Give people the tools they need to engage directly with their bosses & co-workers



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Work Autonomy A Person-Centered Accommodation Tool



- WorkAutonomy: communication with customers, co-workers and supervisors, tracking expectations, and understanding the relationship between production and earnings.
- Capture video, photo, text, and/or voice for messages and work schedules. Set work parameters with your boss, track/share your progress with your supervisor, coach and family.

<https://www.ableapps.com/work-autonomy>

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Get Input/Feedback from Employees, Employer and Co-workers

- Share progress and data with employee and supervisors:
 - In-formal check-ins: quick chats with employee, supervisor and co-workers
 - Include employee's thoughts in case notes
 - Formal evaluations/performance reviews
 - Problem-solve together



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Building Connections and Friendships

- Make sure the employee is working next to and with peers
- Teach “breakroom banter” (then leave the room)
- Identify ways to “connect”:
 - Photos/items on desk or locker
 - Spanish lessons/Cinco de Mayo potluck
 - *Fist-bump blowups*
 - *“There you go again- causing trouble”*
 - Andrea’s monthly newsletter



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Coffee Breaks and Birthday Cakes

Encourage/support the employee to participate in company's events:

- Volunteering with Co-workers
- Walk-a-thons
- Company Picnics & holiday events
- Contests
- Softball teams
- “Donut-Fridays”
- “Bow-tie” Thursdays

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Small Intentional Acts of Kindness

- “Can I help you with that?”
- Homemade birthday cards
- Baked cookies to share at lunch
- Knitted booties for a coworker’s new baby
- “End of the day Goodbyes” for everyone!



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Julio @ IDEO



Finding ways
to foster
connections

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Teaching Soft Skills and Addressing Interpersonal Issues

See something? DO SOMETHING!

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If it makes you uncomfortable, it probably makes others feel that way too.

Must address!

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Skill Deficit, Behavior or Other Factor?

Skill Deficit:
The person doesn't know what is expected or how to behave in a socially accepted way

Behavior:
The person knows what is expected and chooses not to behave that way for some reason

Other factors:
Environmental
Disability-related
Cultural

What are you seeing?

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Teach Sandbox/Soft Skills



- The "Helper" vs. the one being helped
- Responsibility: People rely on me
- Professionalism: Inside voice, good hygiene, fist bump, "Are you busy?"
- Teach initiative: "I'm done- what's next?" Finding help when needed
- Work Ethic: "Gotta get the job done."
- Teamwork: "Can I help you with that?" "Can you help me?", "Let's do this together."

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- Clarify and model “good” and “not so good” social skills
- Grab “teachable moments”
- Create opportunities to interact and work with others
- Always reinforce good social skills
- Use T-charts to teach social vocabulary and constructs

Social Interactions: Data Sheet

Name: _____ Date: 9/9/2020 Instructor: Suzanne

Observation			
1	<u>0.6</u>	<u>1.0</u>	<u>0.6</u>
2	<u>1.0</u>	<u>+</u>	<u>+</u>
3	<u>0.6/0.6</u>	<u>+</u>	<u>+</u>
4	<u>+</u>	<u>+</u>	<u>+</u>
5	<u>+</u>	<u>+</u>	<u>1.0</u>

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TEAMWORK

Looks Like:	Sounds Like:
Helping someone <u>to</u> do something.	"Do you need help with that?"
Carrying a heavy <u>box</u> with someone.	"You do this and I'll do that."
"Chipping in when I finish my work."	"Let's do this together."
We each do a part <u>of</u> a job: like folding and stuffing letters.	

- A discussion platform used to define social constructs and “concepts” (e.g. teamwork, love, being good, initiative) for concrete thinkers
- Identifies what concepts look and sound like- the behaviors and language you see or hear
- Used to draw distinctions between similar things (e.g. friends who are boys vs. Boyfriends, teenagers vs. adults)
- Or compare and contrast social constructs (e.g. respect vs. disrespect; Professional vs. unprofessional)
- Builds a Social Vocabulary (i.e. cooperation, consensus, responsibility, flexibility)

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- Evaluate situation/behavior (ABC)
- Talk to the employee about the issue in an empathetic, non-judgmental way- Listen carefully
- Discuss consequences of the employee's actions
- Discuss ways to address it and decide together "best way forward"
- Include peer-mentors whenever possible- and make it FUN
- Reinforce appropriate behaviors when you see them



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Positive Behavioral Supports for Lori: Co-workers made a big difference



- Problem-solved with her
- Adjusted arrival time; taught her "breakroom etiquette/banter"
- Participated in the Friday "potluck" lunch
- Posted pictures/posters in her locker
- Whiteboard for job assignments: easier way to engage w/mgr.
- Taught her "Can I help you with that?" "Can you help me with this?"
- Peer-mentor: work together, reinforced good work habits



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Other Factors?

- Mitigate the environmental issues
- Provide information and resources on how to best support the employee
- Promote cultural awareness & sharing



Autism Lunch and Learn

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Lessons Learned

- Belonging is an "interactive" process- build opportunities to engage
- Assess "corporate culture"- clarify the "do's and don'ts"
- Encourage supervisor/co-worker involvement and mentoring
- Identify commonalities. Find creative ways to engage with coworkers to build connections and friendships
- Assess root cause of interpersonal situations: Is it a skill deficit? behavioral situation? or another factor? Address accordingly
- Job Coaching is more than just teaching job tasks and taking data on performance

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Questions?





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About TransCen
TransCen, Inc. is a national organization offering web-based and in-person training for state agencies, school districts, provider organizations, and others interested in meaningful work and community inclusion for individuals with disabilities.
Learn more about our work:
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