Student Employment Summit

Facilitating Success for Neurodivergent Students in Their Workplace

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Outline/Topics Slide

• Language of Neurodiverse and Neurodivergent
• Ableism definition
• Context
• Accommodations/Universal Design
Definitions

**Neurodiversity**

- No normal style of human brain or mind
- No one right way of thinking, learning of behaving
- Just the normal difference in brains, how they work, and how humans experience the world
- Differences are not often viewed deficits
- Very broad community

**Neurodivergent/Neuro-variant**

- Having a mind that functions in ways which diverge significantly from dominant standards of “normal”
- Differing in neurological functioning
- Interpreting and interacting with world in unique ways
- Not "typical"
- Can be a bit more specific or narrow
  - Definitely includes autism, but also often includes LD, OCD, Tourette's Syndrome, social anxiety, and language disorders
Ableism

• The act of prejudice or discrimination against people with disabilities and/or the devaluation of disability

• A system of assigning value to people’s bodies and minds based on societally constructed ideas of normalcy, productivity, desirability, intelligence, excellence and fitness.

• Deeply rooted in eugenics, anti-Blackness, misogyny, colonialism, imperialism, and capitalism.

• This systemic oppression leads to people and society determining people's value based on their culture, age, language, appearance, religion, birth or living place, "health/wellness", and/or their ability to satisfactorily re/produce, "excel" and "behave".

• You do not have to be disabled to experience ableism.

- a working definition by Talila "TL" Lewis*
Population and Prevalence

**US**

- 27% of population
- 12.8% considered to have serious difficulty with cognition
  - ADHD- 10% - 11% of youth nationwide
  - ASD- 1 in 36
  - LD – 5-15% of population

**UW-Madison**

- 9% of student population
- Total Affiliated Students= 5379
  - ADHD- 28%
  - ASD- 2%
  - LD- 7%
  - OCD-2%
  - Anxiety- 22%
General Presentation of ADHD and LD

**ADHD**
- Paying attention
- Sustaining focus
- Organization
- Processing Speed
- Working Memory
- Interest level/stimulation
- Impulsivity
- Creativity

**Learning Disability**
- Language-based disability
  - Spelling
  - Grammar
  - Writing
  - Reading
    - Rate/fluency
    - Comprehension
- Word finding
- Processing speed
- Working memory
- Can also include math
General Presentation of ASD and OCD

**ASD**
- High levels of synapse connection and responsiveness
- Social/communication differences
- Repetitive behaviors or interests
- Sensory differences/needs
- Uneven learning profiles

**OCD**
- Cycles of rituals, behaviors, and/or thoughts
- Strong thought patterns
- Behaviors that cannot help but be performed
- Concentration
- Time management
- Higher levels of brain activity
Commonality: Executive Functioning

- Higher-order cognitive skills that are needed to analyze, organize, plan, execute, evaluate, and adjust behaviors and actions

- Plan ahead to meet goals
- Self-control: Impulse and emotional
- Self-monitoring
- Staying focused
- Flexible Thinking
- Time management
- Initiation
- Organization
- Following multi-step directions
Common Barriers in Employment Setting

- Cognitive load
- Pressure to work quickly
- Processing speed
- Working memory
- Concentration
- Communication
- Ableism
Universal Design and Inclusive Practices

- Universal Design defined
- Made to be usable for everyone, to the greatest extent possible, without accommodations
- Broad ideas help everybody
- Not specific to a population/student experience
- Not accommodations; much more proactive than reactive accommodations.
Employee Expectations

• For many students, this may be their first job.
• Having a handbook or list of expectations in writing helps to make sure everyone is on the same page.
  • This helps all employees including those with impacts to executive functioning.
  • Limit implied or unwritten rules/expectations. It leaves greater opportunities for miscommunication or misunderstandings.
• Things you can include
  • Attendance – when to arrive at work, what to do if missing a scheduled shift.
  • Attire – dress code or explicit expectations.
  • What to do if there is down time.
  • Example scenarios of what to do for problem solving.
• Having a peer mentor to help with training and understanding other implicit team norms.
• Regular reminders for employee responsibilities as an
  • Send regular emails to the team about completing timesheets or other deadlines
  • Use Outlook calendar to "invite" students to their shift.
Work Environment

• Standing or other opportunities to be away from workstation.
  • Getting the mail, running something to another building, making copies, etc.
• Taking breaks or making breaks happen.
  • "It is quiet now, why don't you take a break to walk, get a coffee, etc."
• Allowing for headphones/noise reduction
• Opportunity for natural or dim lighting
• Interpersonal expectations/group norms
  • "When you get to work, I'll typically ask you how your day is going."
Task Management/initiation/organization

• Having task charts or checklists
  • Options for both printed and digital lists

**Computer Opening and Closing Procedures**

**Opening – 7:45am**

1. Log in to/open up
   - Microsoft Teams
   - Outlook
   - AIM
   - Wiki
   - McBurney website
   - Phone call log (excel)
   - Sticky notes (one note via teams) => can open in web browser
   - Other eg, pinned Word Docs

2. Listen to voicemail
   - Record in Voicemail log (call log online).
   - Call back and follow up

3. Cross check AIM appointments to outlook for the next day’s appointments
   a. To see the scheduled AIM appointments, go to “Manage Appointments” => “Daily Appointments” => next day
   b. Access Consultants
      - Caitlin Farrell Haven (CFH)
      - Cody Sortle Theis (CST)
      - Edwunike Harbour (EH)
      - Gwynette Hall (GH)
      - Heather Stelljes (HS)
      - Jessie Kourlicrousp (JK)
      - Kate Doran (KD)
      - Katy Wong (KW)
      - Kory Fucker (KP)
Task Management and Organization

• OneNote (online) as a real-time, dynamic format for tasks or reference.
Initiation Supports

- Hotkeys to open programs or reference docs, frequently used text.
  - https://autohotkey.com
- Setting bookmarks in browser to open on startup

Reason:
Phone:
By: Ryan K
Date: 07-09
Email:
Other (eg laptop type):
Organizational Supports

• Organizing documents, emails, etc into narrow, specific folders
Check-in's and Individualized Communication

• Being open to feedback as a supervisor
• Regular, predictable meetings
  • Schedule and provide agenda/topics ahead of time.
• Bigger, broad topics with specific questions to dig deeper as needed.
  • Start with broad, open questions to see where conversations go.
  • Be prepared to dig deeper.
Staff Meetings and Communications

• Communicate important info to the group as a whole.
  • Emails or other written communications.
  • Audibly in a meeting or to the team.
  • Send a copy of a meeting agenda ahead of time.

• Consider Hybrid meetings
  • Provides flexibility with schedules.
  • Option for cameras off.
  • Automated captions.

• Notetakers for meetings
  • Opportunity to build skills.
  • Save auto transcript of meetings if OK with the group.
Thank you!

Questions?

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