

ON THE JOB TRAINING – PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY IN PAID WORK

On the job training is when people get a job and they receive training while they are working. This type of training is a good way for many people with intellectual disability to learn job skills while they are in paid work.

This summary is about part of a research project. We asked people about how on the job training helped them when they were learning their new job.

What the research was about

- On the job training is good in many ways. It helps people learn in practical ways. On the job training is value for money because co-workers can share knowledge and know-how.
- On the job training was offered to 8 people with disability when they started work in aged care. They were called trainees. Most people had intellectual disability.

How the research was done

- The trainees in the research worked for 4 aged care organisations. Their jobs were for 1 year. On the job training was part of their jobs.
- Trainees and organisations were supported by the Road to Employment project at Purple Orange.
- Researchers asked everyone about how and when on the job training worked well and when it was not useful to the trainee. The information included stories from the people with disability. The workers in aged care and Purple Orange also helped with the research.

What we found out

- Using a mix of on the job supports to meet each trainee's learning styles worked best. Designing the training to suit each person's interests, goals and ways of learning was important. Some trainees told other workers about how they liked to be supported. Trainees liked the chance to do the things at work that they were learning in their course.
- Some trainees found it hard at first to learn about how to decide if something was important or dangerous in their jobs. These difficulties were temporary. All staff who have not worked in aged care before have this difficulty at the start.
- In time, trainees became more familiar with their different tasks. Managers and co-workers saw trainees' confidence and skills grow. Staff talked about how they liked working in diverse teams.
- All workers need to learn skills for team building and to communicate positively.
- Managers giving regular feedback to trainees was important to them. Feedback about good work and when things needed to improve were both useful. Staff needed to think about good ways to give feedback so it helped the trainees to improve their work.

- Trainees had positive work experiences when they felt they were included and part of the team. They felt valued and respected for their work.
- Attitudes of co-workers and managers changed during the traineeships. They learned that trainees were valued members of the aged care teams they worked in. Trainees brought their own strengths like respect, care, and understanding of people living in aged care.

What we learned for future trainees

- On the job training is a good way to help trainees to learn new skills and become more confident at work.
- Trainees need opportunities to communicate their learning needs and be able to reach out for help to someone they trust when they need it.
- Short 'come and try' work experiences should be available to people with disability if they want to before starting traineeships. This can help people find out if aged care is for them.
- People with disability in the workplace should be part of teaching staff and mentors about their own personal learning styles and how they like to get feedback, and the support they need to do well at work.
- Including people with intellectual disability in the workplace needs trainees, managers, mentors and co-workers to all work together. This research showed that when people all work together, skills and attitudes for a positive and inclusive workplace grow over time.
- More people with disability should be employed because of the strengths and attitudes they bring to workplace. Trainees with disability have an important role.

References

Alexander J; Gendera S; Fisher K; Robinson S; Howe K, 2023, 'On-the-job training supports for people with intellectual disability employed in aged care', *Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.3109/13668250.2023.2256075>

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http://handle.unsw.edu.au/1959.4/unsworks_83147

Project websites and contacts

Road to Employment <https://purpleorange.org.au/what-we-do/our-current-projects/road-to-employment>

Research and publications www.unsw.edu.au/research/sprc/our-projects/road-employment-evaluation

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