Workplace Accommodations for People Who Are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing

Wednesday, September 17, 2014

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Customize Your View continued

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Workplace Accommodations for People Who Are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing

Presenter:
Valerie Stafford-Mallis, M.B.A., Business Development Manager
Alternative Communication Services, LLC
Learning Objectives

• Hearing Loss in the Workplace 101
• Rights and Responsibilities on the part of the worker and the employer
• Challenging Listening Situations and Communication Strategies
• Assistive Devices, Services and Technology
• Resources

Types of Hearing Loss

• D/deaf
• Late-Deafened
• Hard of Hearing
• Deaf-Blind
What Happens When Hearing Ability Decreases?

- Normal Hearing
- Mild Hearing Loss
- Moderate Hearing Loss
- Moderately Severe Hearing Loss
- Severe Hearing Loss
- Profound Hearing Loss

The Employee With Hearing Loss

The Good, The Bad, and the Ugly
Issues Facing the Worker with Hearing Loss

- Mobility
- Self-Direcution
- Work Skills
- Self-Care
- Communication
- Interpersonal Skills
- Work Tolerance

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Hearing Loss In The Workplace – What Is Good About It?

- Productivity can increase
- Communication (verbal and non-verbal) skills can increase
- Hearing loss accommodations can be very cost-effective
- Workplace diversity can increase
- Dedication to the employer can increase
- Problem solving skills can increase
- Safety awareness can increase

Accommodation and the Law

NOT Intended To Be Legal Advice
Who Has To Do What?

Employee’s Responsibility

- To inform the employer (verbally or in writing) that an accommodation is needed because of a disability
- Suggest solutions
- To be prepared to provide reasonable documentation if the disability is not obvious

Employer’s Responsibility

- Employers are required to provide adjustments or modifications that enable qualified people with disabilities to enjoy equal employment opportunities, unless doing so results in undue hardship (significant difficulty or expense)

Typical Workplace Reasonable Accommodations

- Amplified Telephone
- Captioning of videos and web meetings
- Sign language interpreter
- Speech-to-Text services (CART)
- Assistive listening devices
- Flashing light for telephone
- Reduced ambient noise
- Office as opposed to cubicle
- Job modification
Workplace Accommodation Questions?

www.askjan.org

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973

• Forerunner of the ADA; applies to entities receiving Federal funds

• Section 504: removal of barriers that prevent equal access to goods and services
  http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/civilrights/resources/factsheets/504.pdf

• Section 508: Federal government electronic and IT must be equally accessible
  http://www.fcc.gov/encyclopedia/section-508-rehabilitation-act
The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 503

- Hiring, retaining, and promoting persons with disabilities
- Governmental agencies, contractors, subcontractors, private entities doing more than $10,000 in business with the government
- Affirmative action aspects
- Sets nationwide utilization goal of 7% for qualified persons with disabilities
- Sets nationwide utilization goals for qualified persons who are veterans

http://www.dol.gov/ofccp/regs/compliance/ca_503.htm

American with Disabilities Act

- Title I Employment
- Title II Government Entities
- Title III Private Entities and Businesses
- Title IV Telecommunications
- Virtually all entities, public and private
- Broad definition of what is a disability

http://www.ada.gov
21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act

Two Titles

• Title I – Broadband products & services (such as smart phones)
• Title II – Video programming on TV and the Internet
• Both Titles cover access to emergency information (such as Next-Generation 911 services and emergency TV messaging)


A Word about Hearing Aids

• Not an ADA accommodation – they are EMPLOYEE’s responsibility to provide
• They really can help most people
• Some insurance policies cover some of the cost, many policies do not
• Companies are tightening their belts and reducing benefits
New DOJ Technical Assistance Pub
http://www.ada.gov/effective-comm.htm

Overview

People who have vision, hearing, or speech disabilities ("communication disabilities") use different ways to communicate. For example, people who are deaf may sign and receive information about their environment by watching a person's face or hands. People who are deaf may give and receive information through writing or sign language rather than through speech.

The ADA requires that title I (State and local governments) and title II (public accommodations and commercial facilities) use these different ways to communicate. The ADA requires that "communication with people who have disabilities is equally effective as communication with people without disabilities."

Two Personal Favorites

Job Accommodation Network
www.askjan.org

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
www.eeoc.gov/facts/deafness.html
What About A VR Referral?
(Vocational Rehabilitation)

What Happens at VR?

- Psychological Assessment
- Vocational Assessment
- Training Choices
- On-The-Job Training
- Job Modification Strategies
- Work Hardening
- Coping Skills
Effective Workplace Communication
Best Practices

• Get individual’s attention before speaking
• Eliminate background noise
• Have the light shining on speaker’s face
• Remove visual obstacles so person can see speaker foreign objects from speaker’s mouth
• Speak as you usually do, pause every few phrases for person to catch up, enunciate clearly
• Rephrase rather than repeat endlessly
• Use written notes
• Use computer + keyboard for e-mail and instant messaging
• Provide an interpreter (onsite or remote)
• Provide CART (onsite or remote)
• Provide an augmentative communication device such as Ubi-Duo
• Consider a computer + speech recognition software such as Dragon Dictation if CART not available

• Provide Sign language interpreters if the person communicates in sign language
• Encourage co-workers to learn a few conversational sign language signs
• Use an assistive listening device
• Pocket talker with headset or neck loop
• Personal FM system
• Use FM, Infrared, or induction loop assistive listening systems patched into the room's sound system
• Record and transcribe meetings
• Caption DVD's/videos and anything that involves the sound of the spoken word
• Provide hearing disability training for employees responsible for setting up town hall meetings

• Provide sound absorbing panels and carpeting
• Prohibit the use of personal radios and CD players without the use of ear buds
• Separate the workstation from noisy office equipment and areas where employees congregate
• 4 walls and a door is best
• Provide visual or tactile alerting devices
Utilizing Assistive Services and Technology

CART Communication Access Real-time Technology

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Sign Language Interpretation

One-on-One Text Communication

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Pocket Talkers & Personal FM Systems

Other Assistive Devices

- Alarm clocks
- Timers and watches
- Door signalers
- Phone/strobe signalers
- Paging systems
- Personal Amplifiers/FM Systems
- Visual/auditory/tactile alerts

(Picture from Library Services for the Deaf and HH Website: www.tndeeflibrary.nashville.gov)
Accessible In-office Telephony

Communication Devices

TTY

Cell Phones
Text/Tablets

Amplifier/Clarity/
Cap-Tel/Caption Call
Mobile Technology
Deaf-blind Solution
• HumanWare Communicator App [$99.00, iOS]
  Along with compatible braille keyboard/braille display

• Use telephone amplification technology
• Use a captioned phone (CapTel phone or Web Cap Tel. Both use speech recognition software)
• Reduce background noise
• Provide a hearing-aid compatible headset designed to plug into the phone
• Adjust sound frequency to improve clarity
• Use a voicemail transcription service
- Use Bluetooth technology and amplification/clarity devices with cell phones
- Use remote CART (real-time captioning) during group conference calls
- Use high quality equipment during conference calls
- Use conferencing phone with headset for more direct sound

- Use a voice carry over phone and the telecommunications relay service
- Use a videophone and the telecommunications relay service
- Use a TTY and the telecommunications relay service
- Use PC or wireless device to make a Web Cap Tel call over the Internet
Voice Carry Over and Video Relay Service

Other Text Services

- Email
- Instant messaging
- Automatic voicemail transcription services that convert voicemail to text and send it via texts or email.
  - SimulScribe (www.simulscribe.com)
  - CallWave (www.callwave.com)
  - Spinvox (www.spinvox.com)
  - Gotvoice (www.gotvoice.com)
- Remote transcription
- More info: http://tap.gallaudet.edu/
Accessible Meetings

Meeting Accessibility Considerations

Meeting room layout
- Sight lines
- Amplification
- CART/ASL positioning

Meeting Etiquette
- 1 speaker at a time
- No side-bars

Accommodations
- Captioning
- Sign Language
- Assistive Devices

Digital Media Captioning
• Provide CART Communication Access Realtime Translation
• Provide Sign Language Interpretation
• Provide computer-assisted or standard note taking
• Use captioned web-based meeting platforms
• Provide outlines & handouts ahead of time
• Address environmental factors

• Adequate space for interpreters, caption writers, and equipment
• Platforms for interpreters
• Screens & projectors for CART writers
• Adequate number and types of interpreters:
  o Sign language interpreters
  o Video remote sign language interpreters
  o Oral interpreters
• Sit at a round table if possible to facilitate speech reading
• Meet in a quiet room
• Adjust lighting & seating
• Follow proper meeting etiquette:
  o One person talks at a time
  o Maintain eye contact
  o Monitor diction and speech cadence
  o Don’t cover mouth with hands or papers
  o Repeat questions that get asked

Questions?

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Thank you for participating in today’s session!

The next USBLN webinar is scheduled for:
October 15, 2014
1:00pm-2:00pm Eastern time.

Assistive Technology in the Workplace: Effectively Accommodating Persons with Disabilities in the Workplace

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