Are you Ready?

Preparing for the Workforce of Tomorrow

About this module
Goal: To engage participants in considering how upcoming demographic and disability trends could impact business and the workplace.
Format: Guided discussion
Time: 30 minutes (45 minutes for groups of more than 40 participants)
Potential audience: Job-seekers with disabilities, employers, recruiting/staffing professionals, disability service providers, employers/business leaders, educators
Materials needed:
- Hard copy of presentation optional. Offer to send text version to those who need it after the session.
- Handouts containing trends—Make a packet of eight handouts for each participant (Handouts can be copied in black/white to save resources). These eight handouts are given at the end of the Facilitator’s Guide for this Module.

Facilitator’s Tips for this module

This module has been designed to be highly interactive and engaging. The module consists mostly of guided discussions around certain disability- and workplace-related trends. Participants are asked to think through whether these trends ring true to them, how these trends will impact both their workplace (or the workplace in general if they are unemployed) and what employers might need to do differently as a result of these trends.

This module requires not just presentation skills, but true facilitation skills. As a facilitator, you are more in a listening mode than a telling mode. The main ideas informing the discussion should, if possible, come from the participants, not the facilitator. However, the facilitator needs to be prepared to contribute ideas if none are forthcoming, to make sure a range of voices and ideas get heard, to spur discussion if it lags and to gently question incorrect assumptions that may have found their way into the discussion.

Our experience with activities similar to this one suggests that the discussion often takes a little time to “get going.” However, once the discussion is off the ground, it can become very lively. A significant challenge for the facilitator is to move the discussion along so that all eight small groups have roughly equal time to discuss their ideas.

Your approach to this module will depend somewhat on your audience. If you have an audience that consists of people with disabilities their discussions will probably focus more on their own employment or job-seeking decisions. If your audience consists of disability-related
professionals or service providers, their focus will probably be on how they may need to change their practices in counseling job-seekers with disabilities and reaching out to employers. Finally, if your audience consists of employers, their focus will probably be on changes in workplace practices and processes.

On rare occasions, participants might make statements that are inaccurate or blatantly discriminatory during the course of discussion. Be prepared to respectfully challenge these statements by referring to the facts or by offering alternative explanations.

Here are a few “Do’s” and “Don’ts” to consider when facilitating this module:

Do:

- **KEEP THE SESSION WITHIN THE PROMISED TIME ALLOCATED.** Discussions during this session can be lively. If appropriate, offer to continue the discussion for participants who wish to remain.
- Become familiar with each of these trends by using the resources given for each trend-handout and by your own research on these trends.
- Keep in mind that the statistics given for these trends can change over time and can differ depending on the sources and definitions used. Point this out to participants as needed.
- Be patient, waiting until the small group and large group discussions emerge.
- As much as possible, let the participants come up with ideas around each trend.
- Be prepared to supplement the discussion with certain ideas for each trend (given below) if the group does not come up with these ideas.
- Move the process forward to **ensure that each group gets time to discuss their trend and share their trend with the large group.**
- Refer participants with specific issues or cases to either the ADA Center TA line (800 949 4232) or ask them to see you after the session.
- Try to include all participants in the discussion, relating new ideas coming into the discussion to other ideas that have already been discussed.
- Listen carefully to the ideas of each small group.

Don’t:

- Spend more time on the first small groups reporting out their ideas. There is a temptation to give more time to earlier groups to report out their ideas, not giving equal time to later groups for their discussion.
- Shortchange the final question on the handout, focusing on how policies/practices might be impacted by this trend. This question is key to enabling participants to change their behaviors as a result of the workshop.
- Interact with only one or two participants. Try to bring in the ideas of all participants into the large group discussion.
Facilitator’s Notes for this Module

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Facilitator’s notes (Slide 1)
This is the title slide for this module. Explain that the goal of this module is to co-explore how several trends related to disability in the workplace may impact their own work lives or their workplace. During the activity, they will discuss a particular trend in small groups and then debrief their discussion for the large group.

Set up the activity by going through the following steps:

1. Handout the packets to each participants—Each participant gets a packet of all eight handouts. This handout packet is given at the end of the Facilitators Guide for this module. They will use these handouts to make notes during both small group and large group discussion.

2. Divide the large group into eight small groups. The number of participants in each small group depends of course on the size of the overall group. Ideally, small groups should consist of about 3 – 5 people. If your overall group is small, consider either having 2 people in each small group or having 4 small groups and asking each of the 4 small groups to discuss two trends. If your overall group is larger, you may divide into 16 small groups, with 2 small groups working on the same trend.
Disclaimer

Information, materials, and/or technical assistance are intended solely as informal guidance, and are neither a determination of your legal rights or responsibilities under the ADA, nor binding on any agency with enforcement responsibility under the ADA.

The Northeast ADA Center is authorized by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) to provide information, materials, and technical assistance to individuals and entities that are covered by the ADA. The contents of this document were developed under a grant from the Department of Education, NIDRR grant number H133 A110020. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

Facilitator’s Notes (Slide 2)

Change this slide to reflect your regional information.

Trainers, be sure to advise participants that this training is not intended as legal advice.
What trends might impact the workplace in the upcoming decade?

1. Our population is aging; as we age, we are more likely to acquire a disability
2. Employers will continue to discover that people with disabilities perform their jobs as well as others
3. The number of people with disabilities in the U.S. workforce will increase.
4. Educational levels of people with disabilities have been improving and are now nearly at par with others

Facilitator’s notes (Slides 3 & 4)
These slides introduce each of the eight trends that will be discussed in small groups.
At this point, simply read each trend without giving background information, pointing out that some background information for each trend is given on the handouts.

Then, assign each small group a trend to discuss.

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**Facilitator’s notes (Slide 5)**

This slide sets up the small group discussion. The discussion points given under Point #2 are the same as those given on the handouts. Ask participants to find the handout for their trend and use it to record notes during the discussion.

Explain that there will be about 10 minutes of small group discussion. Then, each small group will briefly summarize their discussion of their trend to the large group.

At this point, the facilitator should be available for questions and periodically visit each small group listening into the discussion. If there is a small group that is having trouble getting started in a discussion, ask them to focus on the first point (Does the trend ring true to them?) because this point is generally the easiest to react to. After 5 minutes, give participants a brief reminder that 5 minutes remain for small group discussion.

After 10 minutes, bring participants’ attention back to the large group. 15 minutes remain for the large group debrief if you wish to keep this session to 30 minutes.
Debrief each small group quickly, asking for major points summarizing their discussion. Adjust your debriefing strategy if you have more or less than eight groups. If two groups have discussed the same trend, get summaries from each of these two groups before moving on to the next trend.

If desired, list points around each trend on a flipchart page in front of the room, but plan the timing of the session accordingly. Keep in mind that this will take more time and you may not finish the session in 30 minutes.

What do you see?

Do you see any other disability-related trends impacting the workplace?

Facilitator’s notes (Slide 6)

Depending on how much time remains, ask participants for any other disability-related trends they see impacting the workplace. Possible trends here could include:

- The recession and its impact on employees and job seekers with disabilities
- High-growth or low-growth job sectors
- The use of online-only job application systems
- New federal contracting initiatives requiring disability-related quota guidelines
- Veterans with disabilities returning to the workplace
- Talent shortages in some sectors
- Other?
Conclude this session with the point that these and other trends mean that, now more than ever, disability inclusiveness needs to be a part of diversity practices in the workplace. People with disabilities are a significant source of untapped talent. Disability inclusiveness is not a “nice-to-do” or a source of charity. Rather, disability inclusiveness is about creating effective workplace where everyone has an opportunity to contribute their talent and skills to organizational goals.

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Facilitator’s notes (Slide 7)

National Network: Please insert your centers contact information into this slide.

Conclude by reminding participants that the training materials were produced by the Northeast ADA Center in collaboration with the ADA National Network. Remind them of the free and confidential technical assistance and other services available from your local ADA Center and from the ADA Centers throughout the country. Mention the ADA TA line: 800-949-4232.
Trend #1: Handout for ADA TN Module: Preparing for Upcoming Trends

Our population is aging; as we age, we are more likely to acquire a disability

Our population and our workforce are aging. And, as we age, we are more likely to acquire a disability. Consider the following points*:

- There are about 76 million “baby boomers” in our population.
- According to the U.S. Administration on Aging, persons 65 and older numbered 40.2 million in 2010, with an increase of 5.4 million just in the prior decade.
- In 2030, about one in five U.S. residents will be over age 65.
- According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the employment rate of workers over age 65 grew by over 100% between 1997 and 2007. In comparison, workers aged 25 – 34 grew by only 8%.
- As we age, we are more likely to acquire a disability (U.S. Administration on Aging, 2011).
- However, workers aged 55 – 64 years of age had similar rates of days-away-from-work to those aged 20 – 24 years of age. *

Does this trend ring true to you? Do you see evidence of this trend?

Generally, how might workplaces change because of this trend?

What practices or strategies will be needed to prepare for this trend?

Trend #2: Handout for ADA TN Module: Preparing for Upcoming Trends

Employers will continue to discover that people with disabilities perform their jobs as well as others

Many employers are concerned about work performance and productivity of workers with disabilities. Several research studies show that workers with disabilities perform as well on the job and have the same levels of productivity as workers without disabilities.* Studies conducted by the Kessler Foundation/ National Organization on Disability, the Job Accommodation Network and DePaul University found that employees with disabilities:

- Have similar (or better) overall performance ratings as those without disabilities
- Do not have higher rates of absenteeism
- Have more dedication and less turnover
- Accommodation costs: 56% of accommodations cost nothing; of those that did cost—average was a one-time cost of $500

Does this trend ring true to you? Do you see evidence of this trend?

Generally, how might workplaces change because of this trend?

What practices or strategies will be needed to prepare for this trend?

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Trend #3: Handout for ADA TN Module: Preparing for Upcoming Trends

The number of people with disabilities in the U.S. workforce will increase.

Overall, about 15% - 20% of the US population has a disability (depending on the survey and definition of disability used).* Further, the number of people with disabilities in the workforce is likely to increase for several reasons:

- The aging of our population and workforce.
- Improved assistive technologies which allow more people with disabilities to work.
- Enhanced diagnostic ability means more people are aware of their disability.
- Due to improvements in the field of medicine, more people are surviving injuries.
- Improved access to education means that more people with disabilities are qualified for jobs.

Does this trend ring true to you? Do you see evidence of this trend?

Generally, how might workplaces change because of this trend?

What practices or strategies will be needed to prepare for this trend?

Educational levels of people with disabilities have been improving and are now nearly at par with others.

Individuals currently entering the workforce are the first to have the protections of the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA). Hence, the educational achievements of individuals with disabilities have been steadily improving over the last two decades. Now, people with disabilities overall, have nearly the same levels of educational achievement as others.*

Does this trend ring true to you? Do you see evidence of this trend?

Generally, how might workplaces change because of this trend?

What practices or strategies will be needed to prepare for this trend?

Trend #5: Handout for ADA TN Module: Preparing for Upcoming Trends

Veterans with disabilities will be returning to the civilian workforce.

Veterans bring a lot to a workplace: discipline, teamwork, updated skills, and resilience. This is as true for veterans who have a service-acquired disability. Consider the following points related to the return of veterans with disabilities to the civilian workforce*:

- 21.8 million veterans in U.S. population
- 4.8 million U.S. troops deployed since 1990
- 1.6 million from Iraq/Afghanistan
- 9.6 million veterans in the workforce
- 26% have college degree (compared with 28% of the total population)
- 12.1% unemployment rate 2011 Gulf War Era veterans (8.7% overall non-veteran unemployment rate)

Does this trend ring true to you? Do you see evidence of this trend?

Generally, how might workplaces change because of this trend?

What practices or strategies will be needed to prepare for this trend?

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Trend #6: Handout for ADA TN Module: Preparing for Upcoming Trends

More customers with disabilities will be using products/services.

Whether business/organizations know it or not, a significant segment of customers with disabilities will be using their product or service. People with disabilities represent about 15% - 20% of the U.S. market base, representing a growing and substantial market share of U.S. businesses. Further, nearly 21 million families have at least one member with a disability.*

Sometimes business are fearful that hiring people with disabilities might damage their public image. But what do customers themselves say? A University of Massachusetts & Harris Poll study found that nearly 93% of customers surveyed said they preferred to patronize a business that has people with disabilities in their workforce.* What a business/organization stands for matters—to customers, to current employees and to employees whose talents and skills will be needed in the future.

Does this trend ring true to you? Do you see evidence of this trend?

Generally, how might workplaces change because of this trend?

What practices or strategies will be needed to prepare for this trend?

**Trend #7: Handout for ADA TN Module: Preparing for Upcoming Trends**

**More people with disabilities will be covered under the ADAAA.**

The ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) was passed to restore the original intent of Congress when the ADA was passed in 1990. During the first two decades of the ADA, many people with disabilities were not given the protections of the ADA because the definition of disability excluded the vast majority of people with impairments. Though the ADAAA did not change the fundamental wording of the definition of disability (“Substantially limited in one or more major life activity”), the way in which the terms were defined and applied have now been changed. Consider the following points:

- When considering whether someone has a disability and is “covered” by the ADA, we will consider their condition without the use of mitigating measures (e.g. treatments, devices, equipment, etc.)
- For disabilities which have active and inactive states (e.g. multiple sclerosis), we will consider their condition as always in an active state.
- Employers can be held accountable for adverse impact based upon regarding (assuming) that the individual has a disability which is not transitory or minor.
- Some conditions can be automatically assumed to be protected under the ADA.
- An illustrative list of major life activities and bodily functions will now be used to make the determination whether an individual’s impairment rises to the level of a disability covered under the ADA.*

**Does this trend ring true to you? Do you see evidence of this trend?**

**Generally, how might workplaces change because of this trend?**

**What practices or strategies will be needed to prepare for this trend?**

More people with non-obvious disabilities will be in the workforce.

People with both obvious and non-obvious disabilities are given the protections of the ADA. Examples of non-obvious disabilities include learning disabilities, attention deficit disorder, mental illness, traumatic brain injuries, post-traumatic stress disorder, seizure disorder, diabetes, arthritis, asthma, cancer, and AIDS. Arguably, people with non-obvious disabilities comprise the largest number of people covered under the ADA.* The increase of people with non-obvious disability in the workforce will be due to a number of different factors: the aging of our population, better treatments for these conditions enabling more people to work, and greater likelihood of diagnosis. Different workplace issues may come into play with many different types of non-obvious disability, including disclosure, “believability” and accommodation.

Does this trend ring true to you? Do you see evidence of this trend?

Generally, how might workplaces change because of this trend?

What practices or strategies will be needed to prepare for this trend?