Best Practices in Developing Reasonable Accommodations in the Workplace: Findings Based on the Research Literature

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Since the enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the provision of reasonable accommodations to jobseekers and employees with disabilities has been viewed as an essential component of hiring and retention. However, the literature on reasonable accommodations indicates reluctance on the part of jobseekers and employees with disabilities to request them, and resistance by employers to provide them. This paper reviews the literature on the provision of accommodations from the perspectives of the individual employee, the workplace, and the organization. From these three vantage points, and based on the empirical research, we suggest ten specific strategies and recommendations that the rehabilitation professional can use to address the barriers to the accommodation process in order to increase the probability that employees with disabilities request and receive reasonable accommodations that enhance work performance and contribute to job retention.

Introduction

Reasonable accommodations are defined as any adjustments that allow people with disabilities to enjoy equal employment opportunities as long as the required modifications do not result in "undue hardship for the employer" (Americans with Disabilities Act [ADA], 1990; U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission [EEOC], 2000). Gates (2000) suggests that accommodations are warranted when "gaps in functional capacity caused by the condition interfere with meeting specific requirements of the job" (p. 90). The provision of accommodations is designed to remove or mitigate the effect of physical, social or environmental barriers on the ability of people with disabilities to perform essential job functions. That job accommodations are important to job satisfaction and retention for employees with disabilities has been established through studies of people with disabilities who are working (Fesko, 2001; Mowry & Anderson, 1993; Rumrill, Roessler, Battersby-Longden, & Schuyler, 1998), as well as those who are not (Martin, Brooks, Ortiz, & Veniegas, 2003). Accommodations are also controversial, as evident from complaints lodged with the EEOC as well as from focus groups and interviews with disabled employees (McMahon, 2006; McMahon, et al., 2004).

As is well-known, reasonable accommodations can involve the purchase of equipment, supplies or technology, as well as ongoing modification of work activities (changing work schedules) and job tasks (restructuring jobs) to ensure that employees with disabilities can perform the essential functions of a job. Studies on the provision of accommodations have focused on multiple factors related both to the individual and to the workplace that potentially influence or contribute to the provision of accommodations. In terms of the individual, the most frequently studied factors include the nature and type of disability (Coles, 1996; Koch, Egbert, Coeling, & Ayers, 2005; Rumrill, Roessler, McMahon, & Fitzgerald, 2005), the attributes of the worker (Baldridge, 2002; Martin et al., 2003; Popovich, Scherbaum, Scherbaum, & Polinko, 2003), job type and status (Campolieti, 2004; Lee, 1996), and the employee's expectation regarding the employer's willingness to comply (Baldridge, 2002; Scheid, 1999). In terms of the organization or workplace, factors studied have included the type and costs of accommodations (Granger, Baron & Robinson, 1997; Job Ac-

commodations Network (JAN), nd; Schartz, Hendricks, & Blanck, 2006), employer and co-worker attitudes toward disability and accommodations (Baldridge, 2005; Colella, Paetzold, & Belliveau, 2004), and organizational factors (Bruyere, Erickson & Van Looy, 2004; Bruyere, Erickson & Van Looy, 2006; Lee, 1996). Given the complexity of the topic, the acknowledgement that "accommodations come in units of one", and the fact that companies are not required to report on accommodations provided, it is easy to see why "our understanding of reasonable accommodations in the workplace is incomplete" (Balser, 2007, p. 657). However, two issues can be generalized from the extant literature: 1) the provision of job accommodations is associated with more satisfactory work outcomes for people with disabilities; and 2) the provision of accommodations should be viewed as a complex on-going process, not a onetime event (Gates, 2000; Habeck, Kregel, Head, & Yasuda, 2007).

The purpose of this article is to describe what is known regarding "best practices" in the provision of reasonable accommodations from three perspectives: the individual employee, the workplace, and the organization. From each of these perspectives, the focus is on describing what the research literature suggests regarding successful accommodation practices, and then to formulate these in terms of strategies and practices for the rehabilitation professional.

Individual Employee Issues in Provision of Accommodations

A significant portion of the literature on the provision of accommodations has examined the issue from the perspective of the employee. These studies have focused on such issues from the viewpoint of (1) both an individual and disability-related characteristics; (2) awareness of the ADA, accommodations, and one's strengths, limitations, and accommodation needs; (3) the involvement of the person in disclosure of disability and requesting accommodations; and (4) confidence and competence in negotiating accommodations, and effective processes for developing and implementing accommodations. This section focuses on best practices in the provision of accommodations from the perspective of working with the individual employee with a disability.

Characteristics of the Individual and Accommodations

Research on the relationship between demographic characteristics and type or provision of accommodations has not yielded consistent findings. For example, education level, age, and type of occupation or career have not been consistently found to be related to accommodations for workers with various disabilities (Campolieti, 2004; Dowler & Walls, 1996; Geyer & Schroedel, 1999). Ethnicity and gender are cited more often in the literature on allegations of discrimination under the ADA, in which reasonable accommodations complaints are the second most frequent type of complaint (Lewis, McMahon, West, Armstrong, & Belongia, 2005; McMahon, 2006), however the relationship between these demographics and allegations often vary by type of disability, so that no consistent patterns emerge.

What does seem more related to the provision of accommodations are knowledge of accommodations and rights under the ADA (Frank & Bellini, 2005; Gioia & Brekke, 2003; Granger, 2000; Schneider, 1999), competence and confidence in requesting accommodations (Allaire, Wei, & LaValley, 2003; Rumrill, 1999), previous vocational training (Campolieti, 2004), and the type or severity of disability and related functional limitations compared to the characteristics of the job (Friedman, 1993; MacDonald-Wilson, Rogers, & Massaro, 2003; Koch, et al., 2005; Williams, Sabata, & Zolna, 2006).

People with more severe limitations are more likely to perceive a need for accommodations (Wang, Badley, & Gignac, 2004), whereas vocational rehabilitation (VR) counselors tend to rate accommodations as more problematic than employers (Michaels & Risucci, 1993). Receiving accommodations is associated with improved productivity (Butler, Baldwin, & Johnson, 2006), longer job tenure (Charles, 2004; Fabian, Waterworth, & Ripke, 1993), job advancement (Mowry & Anderson, 1993), earlier return to work (Franche, et al., 2005; Koch et al., 2005), and can reduce or remove job related barriers to employment (Rumrill, Roessler, Vierstra, Hennessey, & Staples, 2004). Rehabilitation professionals who use a structured process to identify accommodation needs, analyze the work environment, develop an accommodation plan, and teach individuals to discuss accommodations with employers facilitate both confidence and competence in their clients who are then more likely to request and receive accommodations that remove job barriers and facilitate successful return to work (Allaire et al., 2003; Gates, Akabas, & Kantrowitz, 1996; Koch et al., 2005; Rumrill, 1999; Rumrill et al., 1998).

Employees perceive the supervisor role as important in the accommodation process in helping to set up and implement accommodations, ensuring the accommodations work, using ergonomic principles, and maximizing use of corporate resources (Koch, et al., 2005; Shaw, Robertson, Pransky, & McLellan, 2003). Factors influencing workplace reactions to accommodations include the provision of a rationale for the reasonable accommodation, and whether an accommodation was employer-initiated, employee-initiated, or jointly initiated (Cleveland, Barnes-Farrell,

& Ratz, 1997). Assisting the employee to involve the supervisor in the accommodation process and facilitating communications between the employer and the employee can improve the outcome of accommodations.

Disclosure of Disability and Requesting Accommodations

People with disabilities are often extremely hesitant to disclose disability to an employer in the workplace (Granger, 2000; Madaus, Foley, McGuire, & Ruban, 2002). This is most often an issue for individuals whose disability is not apparent, and when the disability is one that is associated with more stigma than others, such as psychiatric disabilities, HIV/AIDS, traumatic brain injuries or other cognitive disabilities (Conyers & Boomer, 2005; Ellison, Russinova, MacDonald-Wilson, Rogers, Massaro, Lyass, & Crean, 2002; Fesko, 2001; Gioia & Brekke, 2003). Individuals may be afraid of being treated differently by coworkers (Granger, 2000), of being retaliated against (Frank & Bellini, 2005), of having accommodations or other work opportunities denied to them, or of other negative effects (Fesko, 2001; Madaus et al., 2002). Past negative experiences with requesting accommodations and the perception that employers lack a genuine desire to provide accommodations are other significant barriers to disclosure and requesting accommodations (Frank & Bellini, 2005).

Employees who may need accommodations to address limitations in work due to disability often do not receive them simply because they do not ask for accommodations. However, disclosing disability is required under the ADA in order to obtain an accommodation, and increases the chances of receiving accommodations (Banks, Novak, Mank, & Grossi, 2007). Some factors associated with disclosing and requesting accommodations are: identity as a person with a disability (Dalgin & Gilbride, 2003), perceived worker group supportiveness (Baldridge, 2005), supervisor supportiveness (Shaw, Robertson, Pransky, & McLellan, 2003), perception of the likelihood of receiving accommodations (Baldridge & Viega, 2001), having an employment specialist involved (Granger, et al., 1997), educating people in the work group about accommodations (Gates, 2000), and having a written accommodation plan (Blanck, Andersen, Wallach, & Tenney, 1994).

These findings suggest that rehabilitation professionals should review past experiences with and explore concerns about disclosure of disability and accommodation requests. The more hidden and stigmatized the disability and the less the individual identifies him or herself as a person with a disability, the more attention the rehabilitation professional should pay to processing these decisions with the individual. Weighing the costs and benefits, and discussing when, how, to whom, and who will disclose and request accommodations are important decisions in the accommodation process. Developing a written accommodation plan and preparing the employee to request the accommodation and provide information about the accommodations to supervisors and coworkers can increase self-confidence and competence in accessing accommodations, increasing the likelihood that the employee receives accommodations and returns to work successfully.

Workplace Issues in the Provision of Accommodations

A number of studies have explored workplace issues and their influence on the provision of accommodations, such as employer attitudes (e.g., Gates, 2000; Geyer & Schroedel, 1999), coworker attitudes (e.g., Greene, 2002), and issues in job development and work retention (Gilbride, 2000; Habeck et al., 2007). Studies have also explored issues around the processes of requesting accommodations (e.g., Baldridge, 2002; Houlihan & Reynolds, 2001); and types of accommodations provided, and associated costs (JAN n.d.; Lee, 1996). This section focuses on best practices in the provision of accommodations from the standpoint of 1) developing employer relationships; and 2) addressing employer and coworker attitudes.

Job Placement and Retention Strategies that Affect the Provision of Accommodations

Employer and supervisor understanding of the provisions of the ADA, as well as their attitudes toward reasonable accommodations, significantly influence their successful provision (Unger & Kregel, 2003; Habeck, et al., 2007). Several studies suggest that the identification of workplace supports and accommodations needs to occur early in the placement process (Gates, 2000; Habeck et al., 2007), either by active intervention of the rehabilitation professional, or through preparation of the jobseeker with a disability, or both. Some authors have stressed that the identification and provision of needed accommodations should be viewed as an ongoing process, rather than as a one-time event (Bruyere et al., 2006). This perspective requires that the rehabilitation professional have a good working relationship with the employer in order to function effectively as an advocate, educator, and consultant (Luecking, Fabian, & Tilson, 2004).

Effective job development requires that the rehabilitation professional be familiar with the workplace environment, as well as familiar with employer's personnel needs and requirements. Traditional job development (matching individual interests and skills to available positions) involves careful analysis of both job task demands and work environment factors in order to maxi-

mize the use of existing workplace supports, and to identify specific accommodations assisting the employee with a disability to perform a job (Brodwin, Parker & DeLaGarza, 2004; MacDonald-Wilson, et al., 2003; Rumrill et al., 1998). Although this traditional approach emphasizes what an employee *needs* in order to maximize performance, it is important for the rehabilitation professional or the jobseeker to demonstrate how the provision of accommodations contributes to overall workplace productivity and thus benefits the employer (Habeck et al., 2007).

Recently, an approach to job development known as "customized employment" has been popularized as a method of expanding potential employment opportunities for people with significant disabilities (Federal Register, 2002). Customized employment involves matching individual skills and capacities to observed or assessed workplace *needs*, rather than to available jobs. In other words, the focus is on how modifying existing jobs, or creating new ones, can produce tangible benefits to the employer, such as increased productivity of a work team, enhanced opportunities for customer service, more efficient or effective use of existing employees, and so on (Griffin, Hammis, Geary, & Sullivan, 2008; Maryland Customized Employment Partnership [MCEP], 2004). In customized employment, workplace supports and accommodations are negotiated with the employer in the job development process, and the rehabilitation professional emphasizes how the accommodation benefits the employer and the workplace, rather than how it meets the needs of the individual employee. Reports on customized employment emphasize the importance of the relationship between the rehabilitation professional and the employer in achieving successful outcomes (Blankertz et al., 2005; MCEP, 2004).

The provision of reasonable accommodations also influence work retention and ultimately job satisfaction of employees with disabilities (Charles, 2004). Business and human resource management studies have long demonstrated the cost benefits of retaining existing employees rather than hiring and training new ones (Cleveland, Barnes-Farrell, & Ratz, 1997). Work retention strategies that involve accommodating all employees – not just those with disabilities – include employee benefits such as on-site day care, as well as job modifications such as flexible scheduling, telecommuting and job sharing (Lee, 1996). For people with disabilities, accommodations that foster or promote work retention might also include strategies that sustain work performance and productivity over time; support changes in health conditions, and enhance training resources to encourage job promotion and growth within the company (Habeck et al., 2007). A long-term or work retention approach to the accommodation process requires that rehabilitation professionals develop and sustain employer relationships over time, not just during the hiring phase of employment (Habeck et al.). The benefits that accrue to the employer who adopts a longer-term stance to promoting and accommodating workers with disabilities include lower turn-over, improved employee morale, and demonstrated commitment to organizational equity and diversity (Johnson, Baldwin, & Butler, 1993; Unger & Kregel, 2003). Employers offering disability management or return to work programs have found that the provision of accommodations to injured workers can reduce overall costs and improve productivity (Rutkowski, Daston, Van Kuiken, & Riehle, 2006). Developing ongoing relationships with businesses to promote work retention through accommodations and supports emphasizes the consultant and advocate role of the rehabilitation professional.

Employer and Co-worker Attitudes toward Accommodations and People with Disabilities

In general, studies of employer attitudes toward the ADA and the provision of accommodations in the workplace have indicated a negative bias (e.g., Harlan & Robert, 1998; Hernandez, 2000; Jacoby, Gorry, & Baker, 1987; Popovich et al., 2003; Peck & Kirkbride, 2001) despite the findings that the cost of most accommodations are modest (Granger, et al., 1997; Olson, Cioffi, Yovanoff, & Mank, 2001). In fact, data from the Job Accommodations Network has shown that the majority of accommodations cost less than $500 (JAN, n.d.). However, one important factor in employer attitude research is that employers who have experience in hiring and accommodating workers with disabilities tend to express more positive attitudes toward disability and the provision of reasonable accommodations. For example, Unger, and Kregel (2003) solicited opinions of 300 HR managers and supervisors whose companies had experience in hiring people with disabilities, finding that the vast majority of employers in their study rated their organizations favorably in terms of their capacity and willingness to provide reasonable accommodations. Similarly Gilbride and colleagues (Gilbride, Stensrud, Vandergoot, & Golden, 2003) found positive attitudes toward the ADA among a sample of employers who had hired vocational rehabilitation service clients. Thakker and Solomon (1999) found that managers in companies that exemplified adherence to the ADA expressed more positive attitudes toward hiring and accommodating employees with psychiatric disabilities. Similarly, Diksa and Rogers (1996), surveying employers regarding their attitudes toward hiring individuals with psychiatric disabilities, found that those with a history of hiring people with disabilities expressed fewer concerns regarding performance and disability issues in general.

Gates (2000) found that sustained involvement of the rehabilitation professional in return to work and the accommodation process can positively influence employer and coworker attitudes. Her psychoeducational

model simultaneously prepared employees with psychiatric disabilities, supervisors and co-workers for the re-entry of workers who had experienced a brief disability leave, and found that more intensive involvement and preparation of the workplace facilitated more successful accommodations and more positive attitudes.

Coworker attitudes toward accommodating employees with disabilities have also been explored from the perspective of workplace equity issues, stigma, and perceptions of performance problems. Colella and colleagues (Colella, et al., 2004) noted that coworker views of the need for and fairness of providing workplace accommodations to an employee with a disability can influence whether the individual receives the accommodation. Factors that can influence co-worker perceptions of accommodations provided include type and extent of the disability (e.g., McLaughlin, Bell, & Stringer, 2004), as well as whether coworkers perceive that the disability has resulted in a worker's compensation claim (Roberts & Markel, 2001). Studies have indicated that coworker perceptions of the equity and fairness of accommodations are influenced by organizational values (e.g., Colella et al., 2004), as well as the capacity of the employee with the disability to manage the social and interpersonal issues arising around the accommodation process (Gates, 2000). The latter factor is related to the employee's willingness to disclose the disability and to manage the subsequent social situation.

Employer and workplace issues in the provision of accommodations suggest several issues regarding their provision. One is that the rehabilitation professional, and the jobseeker with a disability, need to view the accommodation process in terms of its benefits to the employer, not simply as fulfilling a need of the individual. In general, it is more effective to address accommodation needs at the beginning of the job placement process, linking the provision to the enhanced productivity of the worker and the potential benefits accruing to the employer. Another issue arising from the literature is that the provision of job accommodations should be viewed as a process, rather than a single event. A process-oriented perspective can prepare the employee and the employer for any additional changes or modifications required over time, and is more likely to sustain the employee's performance, and thus work longevity. Finally, rehabilitation professionals can benefit from developing and sustaining relationships with those employers who have experience or a commitment to organizational diversity, as studies indicate more positive attitudes among this group.

Organizational Issues in the Provision of Accommodations

A subset of the literature on reasonable accommodations reviews the relationship of organizational culture, management practices, and resources to the provision of accommodations in the workplace, especially in the management literature. This section focuses on best practices in the provision of accommodations related to 1) organizational culture and values; and 2) organizational resources, especially for small business.

Organizational Culture and Values

The relationship between reasonable accommodations and organizational values and culture is important to examine. Explicit organizational values and policies regarding diversity and disability in the workplace and organizational flexibility are positively related to accommodating employees with disabilities (Florey & Harrison, 2000; Gilbride, et al., 2003). However, non-inclusive organizational culture and non-responsive management practices are organizational barriers to provision of reasonable accommodation (Gates, 2000; Greene, 2002; Hosford, 1999). Similarly, Frank and Bellini (2005) and Williams-Whitt (2007) concluded that broken trust and betrayal between employees and an organization was one of the barriers associated with the failure to request needed job accommodations.

Sustaining reasonable accommodations in the workplace cannot be easily achieved without making changes in the values and culture of an organization. As previously mentioned, the provision of accommodations should be viewed as a complex and ongoing process, not a one-time event (Bruyere, et al., 2006). According to literature on organizational transformation, change at the procedural level, while more concrete and visible, tends to be shallow and does not involve significant changes at deeper levels, such as change in organizational culture, mission, or paradigm, leading to a greater the possibility that the organizational change will be reversible (Levy & Merry, 1986). Most workplace accommodations are developed and implemented at the procedural level without making changes in organizational culture, values, missions and goals. Accommodations may prove to be short-lived and not satisfactory. For example, Gates (2000) concluded that accommodations provided technically, without genuine respect for diversity and inclusion, and in the absence of social context, compromise the individual's sense of belonging and acceptance. The social context of the organizational must be addressed in providing and sustaining accommodations in the workplace

Changing organizational values and beliefs can be challenging and difficult. According to Bruyere et al.

(2006), changing organizational culture, values, and attitudes toward employees with disabilities are the most challenging. Large companies appear to face more challenges than small companies in changing values and attitudes. Stereotyping, bias, and negative attitudes are the main issues faced by large companies in terms of the provision of workplace supports and accommodations (Bruyere et al., 2006).

A few sound approaches to changing organizational culture and values related to workplace support have been proposed. Moorman (1991) suggested that workplace support was closely related to organizational fairness, which could be boosted by interactional justice. This approach emphasizes that management engage in regular and positive interactions with their employees, leading to the organization being perceived as more equitable and fair. Moreover, the psychoeducational training proposed by Gates (2000), if implemented on a regular and systematic level, may facilitate an inclusive and people-oriented organizational culture, as well as facilitating the provision of accommodations in the workplace.

Organizational Resources

Organizational resources have an impact to the provision of job accommodations. Bruyere et al. (2006) found that organizational resources (in terms of size and type of employment sector) affect an organization's ability to provide accommodations. Compared to larger firms, smaller firms, in general, may have a fewer internal resources, less ADA-related training, and less experience providing accommodations. In addition, smaller firms may also lack knowledge of government incentives for hiring people with disabilities and related tax credits. Unger and Kregel (2003) noted that employers may have limited awareness of workplace supports such as accommodations and often rely on their own organizational resources to identify and secure them, rather than seeking external consultation or information. In addition, supervisors who are in a position to provide accommodations often do not feel they have the authority to secure those accommodations. Perceived and actual limitations in resources may play a role in whether an organization responds to accommodation requests effectively and in a timely manner.

In addition to the resource challenges faced by certain organizations, some businesses may lack information about the accommodations requested or the disability itself (Frank, 2000; Gates, 2000). For example, some employers may believe that job accommodations are too time-consuming or too expensive to handle. Rehabilitation professionals should identify when employers may have trouble responding to accommodation requests, and be familiar with existing workplace resources and processes that can support an effective response to the request (Bruyere, et al., 2004). In addition, rehabilitation professionals can become a resource to employers by providing staff training, on-site consultation and technical assistance when needed, particularly about the ADA and accommodations (Bruyere et al., 2006).

Despite the fact that rehabilitation professionals may not have direct control over organizational practices and policies, the above findings suggest that they can impact the provision of accommodations in organizations by facilitating communications within organizations and teaching people in organizations how to define and solve accommodation issues, framing it as a workplace diversity and inclusion issue. Maximizing the use of existing internal resources and introducing organizations to potential new resources can be useful in mitigating concerns and offsetting any costs to organizations in providing reasonable accommodations.

Recommended Strategies for the Rehabilitation Professional

Findings from the literature review on research on the provision of reasonable accommodations in the workplace suggest a number of strategies that the rehabilitation professional can employ with individuals with disabilities, supervisors, managers, and coworkers in the workplace, and with organizations. The following strategies include recommendations from the individual, workplace, and organizational perspectives.

Strategies for Working with the Individual

1. Assess work skill strengths and disability-related functional limitations relative to job demands and job performance of the employee with the disability. Understanding the work environment demands, and the strengths and limitations of the employee with disabilities can lead to identifying accommodations that can improve job performance and job satisfaction.
2. Use a structured process to identify accommodation needs, and develop an accommodation plan with the employee with a disability, including monitoring the effectiveness of the accommodation over time. Accommodation plans improve the success of accommodations in the workplace and facilitates employee access to needed accommodations.
3. Prepare individuals to request accommodations by providing information on the ADA and the range of accommodation options, processing decisions about accommodations, and teaching skills in disclosing disability and requesting accommodations. Such preparation increases the likelihood of receiving accommodations and results in more confident and competent employees in requesting accommodations.

4. Work with the individual to involve the supervisor and the individuals in the workgroup in the accommodation process. Supervisors and coworkers often need information about disability, accommodations, and the ADA, and perceived workgroup and supervisor supportiveness improves the likelihood that employees will ask for and receive accommodations.

Strategies for the Workplace

5. Focus on the benefits of the provision of accommodations in terms of contributing to the business, not simply addressing an individual employee's needs. Non-traditional job placement practices, such as demand side and customized employment emphasize how individuals with disabilities contribute to and enhance the personnel needs, and subsequent workplace productivity of the business or organization. Gilbride et al. (2003) encourage rehab professionals to adopt a consultant role in identifying and negotiating workplace accommodations, and Gates' (2000) findings underscore the potential role of the rehabilitation professional as an advocate and change agent within the company.
6. Actively seek out employers who have experience in hiring individuals with disabilities through Business Roundtables, Business Leadership Networks, chambers of commerce and personal referral sources (Luecking et al., 2004). There is a clear association between employer experience in hiring and accommodating workers with disabilities and more positive attitudes toward the accommodation process (Florey & Harrison, 2000).
7. Develop enduring relationships with employers, and advocate and consult around the overall business benefits to retaining workers with disabilities in terms of increased productivity, reduced absences, and lower costs (Habeck et al., 2007). The provision of workplace accommodations is a long-term process, not a single event. Rehabilitation professionals need to understand this perspective.

Strategies for Working with the Organization

8. Facilitate communication within organizations to enhance a sense of trust, flexibility and organizational fairness. Developing mutual understanding and reciprocally beneficial relationships among individuals with disabilities, coworkers, supervisors and management enhances the provision of accommodations in the workplace.
9. Highlight how the provision of reasonable accommodations will help to create an organizational culture embracing diversity and inclusion. This type of organizational culture can, in turn, positively shape workplace morale, increase organizational efficiency, and sustain the organization's creativity and public relationships.
10. Offer training on financial incentives, tax credits, and other potential new resources and benefits for providing accommodations in the workplace. Rehabilitation professionals should develop knowledge of these new resources to provide to employers. The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) website provides information on accommodations solutions through its Searchable Online Accommodation Resource (SOAR), guides for employers and employees on steps to developing accommodations, and other resources (http://www.jan.wvu.edu). JAN also offers free individualized technical assistance for professionals, employers, and people with disabilities about accommodations issues (800-526-7234).

Conclusions

Almost two decades after the enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act, employment for individuals with disabilities continues to be a challenge. As we have reviewed, individuals with disabilities indicate the provision of job accommodations reduces barriers to work and enhances productivity, work retention, and long term attachment to the labor market. Despite this, there is evidence of reluctance on the part of individuals with disabilities to request accommodations, and evidence of employer resistance to providing them. These circumstances underscore the need for rehabilitation professionals to understand the accommodation process, and be able to identify and implement effective strategies associated with their provision. Collaborating with the employee with the disability around deciding about, developing, implementing, and monitoring accommodations, involving the workplace in this process, and highlighting benefits both to individuals in the workplace and to the organization as a whole are some of the best practices in developing reasonable accommodations in the workplace. These strategies derived from the research literature can enhance the effectiveness of the rehabilitation professional.

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Continuing Education Credit Questions

Questions are based on the article, *Best Practices in Developing Reasonable Accommodations in the Workplace: Findings Based on the Research Literature*, by McDonald-Wilson et al., beginning on page 221 in Vol 16(4).

1. Which of the following can be generalized about reasonable accommodation from the existing literature?

a. Reasonable accommodation is associated with more satisfactory work outcomes for people with disabilities.
b. Reasonable accommodation should be viewed as a complex on-going process, not a onetime event.
c. Reasonable accommodation is often a burden to the employer
d. Both A and B

2. Factors most related to the provision of reasonable accommodation include the person with a disability's knowledge of accommodation rights under the ADA, competence and confidence in requesting accommodations, type or severity of disability and related functional limitations compared to the characteristics of the job, as well as:

a. previous vocational training.
b. level of education completed.
c. working in a "white collar" job.
d. acquiring a disability later in life.

3. Receiving accommodations is associated with:

a. improved productivity and longer job tenure.
b. job advancement and earlier return to work.
c. the reduction or removal of job related barriers to employment.
d. all of the above.

4. The rehabilitation professional should do all but which of the following when assisting a person with a disability in the disclosure process?

a. Review past experiences with and explore concerns about disclosure of disability and accommodation requests.
b. Explore to what extent the person with the disability identifies as a person with a disability
c. Contact others with the same disability to see how they approached disclosure and how their employers reacted.
d. Weigh the costs and benefits, and discuss when, how, to whom, and who will disclose and request accommodations

5. Work retention strategies that involve accommodating all employees, not just those with disabilities, include employee benefits such as all but which of the following?

a. On-site day care.
b. Job modifications such as flexible scheduling or telecommuting.
c. Giving all employees the same raise.
d. Job sharing.

6. Which is an important characteristic of employers who had positive attitudes about hiring and accommodating people with disabilities?

a. They had experience in hiring and accommodating people with disabilities.
b. They had company policies that required disability training.
c. They received financial incentives to hire and accommodate people with disabilities.
d. They had an on-site disability manager.

7. Most workplace accommodations are developed and implemented at the procedural level without making changes in organizational culture, values, missions and goals. As a result, which is true?

a. Accommodations are therefore much more individualized.
b. Accommodations may prove to be short-lived, superficial, and not satisfactory.
c. Accommodations may prove to be more expensive.
d. Accommodations are therefore much more long-term and adequate.

8. A rehabilitation professional's first response to an employer who's main concern about providing reasonable accommodation is that of being "resource challenged" should include all but which of the following?

a. Be familiar with existing workplace resources and processes.
b. Become a resource to employers by providing staff training, on-site consultation, and technical assistance when needed, particularly about the ADA and accommodations.
c. Maximize the use of existing internal resources and introduce the employer to potential new resources.
d. Strongly remind the employer that the person requesting the accommodation may seek litigation.

9. Literature on reasonable accommodation suggests that not only are employers still resistant to providing them, but:

a. persons with disabilities are still reluctant to request them
b. accommodations are far more expensive than previously acknowledged
c. accommodations are far more "hi-tech" than previously acknowledged
d. accommodations frequently do not improve worker productivity

10. Literature on reasonable accommodation suggests that an organizational culture conducive to providing accommodations is one that embraces:

a. legally literate human resources personnel
b. productivity and profit above all else
c. inclusion and diversity in the workforce
d. the use of long term disability benefits to remove people with impairments from the workforce.