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# Summary speech “Functional assessment in Supported Employment” – Ad Wiese

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In the traditional vocational training the order is Assess-Train-Place. This approach is more deficiency oriented.

Since the early nineties a new method is developed: Supported Employment. In Supported Employment the order is Place-Train-Maintain. This method is more work oriented, rather than deficiency oriented.

The World Association for Supported Employment describes Supported Employment as paid work in integrated work settings with ongoing support for individuals with disabilities in the open labor market. Paid work for individuals means the same payment for the same work as for persons without disabilities.

Supported employment is a method, which has proven to be a very successful one, concerning to obtain a job in the open labor market. S.E. knows several phases:

## **Assessment**

For a successful job placement, a clear understanding of the client's ability to perform particular tasks is necessary. This is determined through formal and informal measures. Special consideration must be given to the interests of the client and how they relate to specific job tasks and to the person's abilities rather than disabilities.

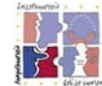
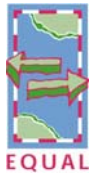
An understanding of the prospective employee's skills, surroundings, interests and possibilities for employment success are acquired. In addition, a great deal of information is furnished by the individuals themselves. If the potential employee is unable to provide the necessary information, data can be acquired from his or her family/guardians and significant others. Involving significant persons in a client's life during the various phases of the Supported Employment methodology is always a good practice.

## **Job Finding**

One phase of the Supported Employment methodology is researching the open labor market to identify suitable job placements for clients with disabilities. The central criteria for suitability are that the job is consistent with client interests and that the client receives regular wages.

When searching for suitable employment possibilities, the focus is always on a specific client. Otherwise, there is the danger of fitting a client to existing jobs- a clear violation of the underlying philosophy of the Supported Employment methodology.

A good understanding of the employer and the company as a whole is necessary. Thus, an analysis of job possibilities in a given region is undertaken before a particular employer is approached. The intent is to acquire a clear understanding of job prospects in a specific



area. Who the client would be directly working for, the various occupational groups within the company, the exact functions of employees within the company and the company's mandate and philosophy are just a few of the areas a support person must inquire into. An inventory of community resources (Transportation, training opportunities, funding sources, employment agencies, etc.) within the given region is also recommended.

The suitability of a job is assessed with respect to task requirements, working conditions, working relationships and terms of employment (pay, benefits, hours of work, etc.). Not only should existing jobs be evaluated, but the possibility of creating new positions should also be assessed.

### **Job Analysis**

The following phase is an important aspect of integrating persons with disabilities into the open labor market. The reason being that it is the point at which the details of a job possibility are attended to. In other words, the various elements of a job are thoroughly examined with the purpose of identifying those able to be completed by the client with a disability. What is sought is a precise understanding of each aspect of the position and the work environment so that a comprehensive job description can be formulated.

The potential job is examined and broken down into smaller components so as to determine which skills and knowledge, on the part of the employee, are necessary for him or her to achieve employment success. It must be emphasized that the intent of the task analysis is not to formulate a list of job qualifications- that would limit opportunities. Rather, it is the basis for designing a training program.

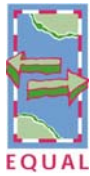
### **Job Matching**

During the following phase, information acquired from the job analysis and assessment is called upon so as to achieve the best possible job placement. In other words, there is the determination of the degree to which job demands match the abilities of the prospective employee.

It is during this phase of the Supported employment method that the individual with a disability is linked to a particular job. A perfect match between an employees' skills and the demands of the position is impossible. The intent, however, is to find the best possible match between the interests of the client and the demands of the position. It must be emphasized that the employee must be aware of all developments in the matching process.

### **Job Coaching**

To assist the employee in achieving job success, he or she is assigned a trainer responsible for providing on-site training and support. The job coach initiates and facilitates systematic learning, on the part of the employee, of the social and practical skills necessary for the position.



The job coach is also intended to be a resource for employers and co-workers. For example, if the computers in a work site are being upgraded, the employer might consult the job coach to determine which equipment would be most compatible with the needs and abilities of the employee with a disability. As previously stated, the job coach should strive to promote, during training, the active involvement of clients and their co-workers.

Before the individual with a disability can begin work, the job coach must be familiar with all aspects of the job placement. Furthermore, he or she must familiarize co-workers of the person with a disability with Supported Employment methods and with their role in the process. It is at this time that the job coach sets up the training program for the disabled employee.

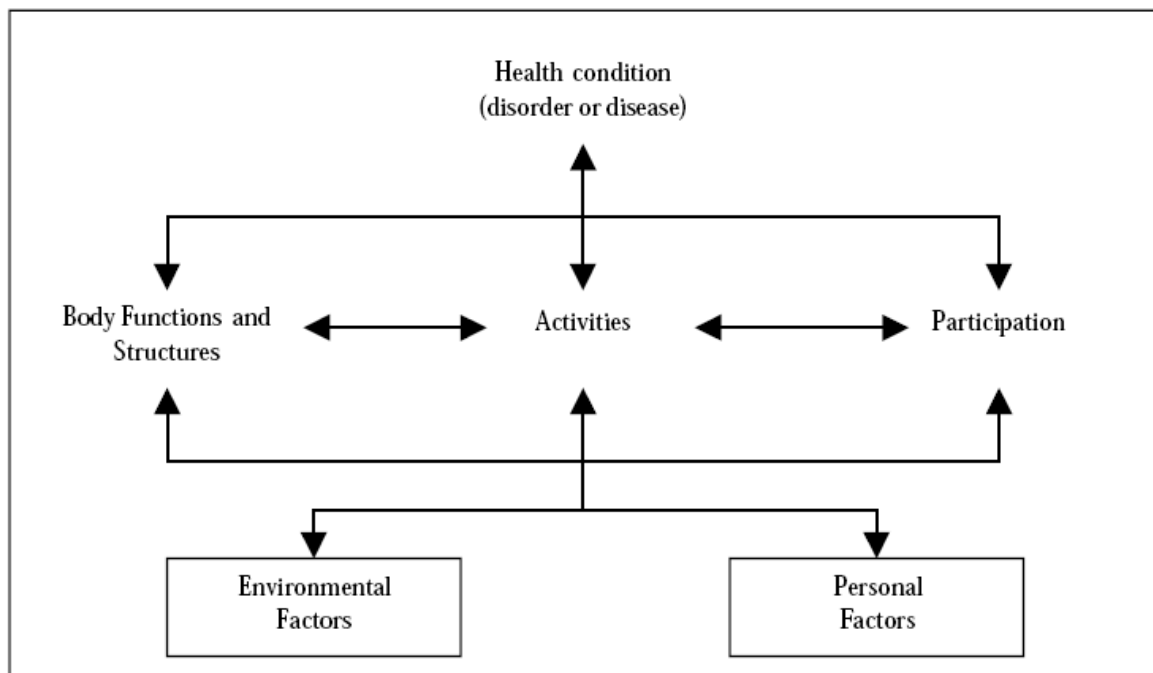
When the disabled employee begins work, a large portion of job tasks will be completed by the job coach. As the employee adjusts to the job, the job coach gradually fades off.

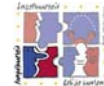
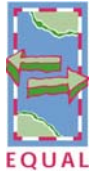
### On going support

The phase of jobcoaching will gradually change into a distant guiding. Clients can call when necessary and the jobcoach can also visit the client, the co-worker and employer.

### Functional Assessment

Assessment can be done in many ways. One way is to make a classification as a start. Most systems are very limited, as they focus on diagnosis rather than perspective in employment. An exception is the International Classification of Functions, a classification system of the World Health Organisation. This system looks at the following items:





The foundations of the ICF are:

- ◆ Human Functioning - not merely disability
- ◆ Universal Model - not a minority model
- ◆ Integrative Model - not merely medical or social
- ◆ Interactive Model - not linear progressive
- ◆ Parity - not etiological causality
- ◆ Context - inclusive - not person alone
- ◆ Cultural applicability - not western concepts
- ◆ Operational - not theory driven alone
- ◆ Life span coverage - not adult driven

More information can be found on [www.who.int/classifications/icf](http://www.who.int/classifications/icf).

As we focus on supported employment, we focus on the functional assessment. There are several approaches in functional assessment. Some see this process as one that seeks to identify the problem; a child or adolescent may have to determine the cause of the problem and to develop interventions to solve it or to have alternatives. They want to identify the problem that needs to change, collect data on the problem, develop a "hypothesis" about the reason of the problem, develop an intervention to help to solve the problem, evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention and most of all .....have patience.

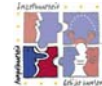
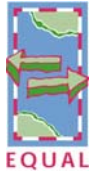
A more effective approach, when it comes to SE, is to see the end of the line: the jobcoaching. A jobcoach coaches a client in

- ◆ Knowing work duties and performance standards
- ◆ Being able to adjust to the site-related expectations
- ◆ Performing site-appropriate work-related behaviors
- ◆ Having the sense of belonging to the workforce
- ◆ Understanding and using the benefits of employment
- ◆ Having a community supportsystem

When we translate these goals in the phase of jobcoaching to what we need to know in the assessment phase, we get the following items:

- ◆ Do you know what your client wants to do
- ◆ Can he perform the work duties and performance standards
- ◆ Is he able to adjust to the site-related expectations
- ◆ Can he perform site-appropriate work-related behaviors
- ◆ Does he have the sense of belonging to the workforce
- ◆ Does he understand and can he use the benefits of employment
- ◆ Does he have a community support system

With each item you can find out whether your client has the competences for this and if this relates to the diagnosis and if so, how. Crucial is if you as a jobcoach can coach him till he knows what he wants to do.



Functional assessment should be considered as a description of the connection between the client's wishes to have a paid work in integrated work settings and a prediction of the client's abilities and competences to fulfill and maintain this job.

And all of this with our support.

Assessment is a prediction of success factors in the future regarding your job. But there are some reasons against this prediction. A lot of different people fit in one job and one person fits in a lot of jobs. Besides this fitting in a job is a matter of development and every person can make a job fitting to himself. And what about education? No training makes you really fit to a job.

Items you can relate to when you do a functional assessment is

- ◆ wishes
- ◆ motives
- ◆ expectations
- ◆ education
- ◆ employment experiences
- ◆ gained skills and hobbies
- ◆ person related factors
- ◆ ability to handle stress
- ◆ learning abilities
- ◆ perspective
- ◆ network support

When we set the materials to build our functional assess tool, we should first make some assumptions: Do we use the method of Supported Employment and do we accept functional assessment as a tool to describe the connection between the client's wishes to have a paid work in integrated work settings and the client's abilities and competences to fulfill and maintain this job. And with the mentioned ingredients we can start to build our functional assess tool.

Ad Wiese