

## QUATSEE ON LINE COURSE OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

### LESSON 10

#### **5th STAGE OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT: ON/OFF THE JOB SUPPORT- EVALUATING AND MONITORING THE LABOUR INCLUSION PROCESS AND LAST RECOMMENDATIONS.**

##### **OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this lesson, you should know:

- What, how and when to evaluate, to make a good follow-up of the worker.
- How to handle "critical situations" and how to anticipate to solve them.
- How to support and follow the person out of the work environment.
- The quality issue and the importance of joining the local, national and international network of the supported employment movement.

##### **Introduction**

We said at the beginning of this course, in the lesson 2, that supported employment is like climbing a difficult, steep summit, with successive installments which constantly challenge us and in whose overcoming we must ensure that we put the foot on a firm and solid support that guarantees an ascent in the right direction. For this, we should also use adequate tools and take the effort with patience, knowing that the road is long and upward, which does not allow us to run, and requires constant self-evaluation, so as not to err on the steps we take, especially since we have chosen the more difficult path, the north face of the peak.

We are now watching the top, it is time to reap the rewards of the long road traveled, our team, worker and job coach, have overcome great obstacles to reach our current position and everything seems to be going well, we have overcome our initial fears and have gained confidence in ourselves. Now we can ensure that our employee has obtained a job, he/she has been accepted at the company where he/she is, and has learned the functions assigned. It is true that he/she has to improve some personal aspects, but in general, we can ensure that he/she is well suited to this job.

And this is the top of the peak where we wanted to go with supported employment: match a worker with diverse abilities in a normalized scenario of production, with other citizens, and feeling useful and valued for the contribution he/she makes. And now there is something very important: keep this position.

Moon et al. (1986), years ago, said that "*monitoring is an essential component of supported employment and a function required to the job coach to help workers to keep their jobs.*" The follow-up or monitoring is therefore a key element of supported employment and cannot be trivialized, limiting it, for example, to a short period of time, for budgetary reasons. If this stage is not well applied, everything achieved in the previous ones could get ruined quickly, causing the failure of the whole

process and the frustration of expectations. As in the closed system of sheltered employment monitoring and support to the group of people with a disability do not have limited time of application, but they are kept whenever the workers require it, much more in the open system of *supported employment*, where the services are provided in the community, the monitoring should be maintained over time, whenever the included workers require it.

So let's get into the contents of this important component of supported employment. The actions that professional of support should perform during this stage involve the following **technical competences**:

- Verify the satisfaction of the employer who accepted to participate in a supported employment experience.
- Monitor the work performance of the employee, making sure he/she is responding with a quality work and in satisfaction of the company.
- Monitor the worker's motivation in all relating to his/her job and support him/her in his/her career advancement.
- Gather information on the social interaction of the worker and his/her relationships with co-workers, checking the level of real social inclusion.
- Anticipate conflicts, foreseeing events, and identifying "critical situations" and applying in each case the proper remedy.
- Keep high the motivation of natural supports to collaborate effectively over time.
- Remain attentive to the technological innovations of the company, and ensure that workers receive the necessary instruction to get adapted to new machinery and processes.
- Update the individualised plan that includes the specificity of each person who is being accompanied in the objectives to work both inside and outside the company.

### **10. 1. What, how and when to evaluate.**

The individual monitoring of labour inclusion process and the consequences it has on the person's life, is an essential component of supported employment.

#### **Functions inside the company**

##### ***Keep informing***

In this last stage of the system, the job coach does not take part so directly inside the company, but is concerned for gathering information about what happens in the workplace, for the quality for the execution of the tasks assigned to the worker with diverse abilities, for the natural supports and social relations in the workplace, and for the changes of all kinds: machinery or tools, process of production, internal regulations, etc., occurring in the work environment.

##### ***Natural supports***

Natural supports should be the main allies of the job coach within the company, especially the tutor or mentor, the professional of support has no longer a daily presence in the workplace, but he/she must have actual knowledge of the adaptation of workers to the workplace and to co-workers of his/her department, and must know, especially, how they are solving small problems or difficulties that may inevitably arise. If evolution of adaptation or the results say so, the job coach

will have to apply the most appropriate procedure to correct the situation, including again, if necessary, his/her intermittent presence in the workplace.

***Check satisfaction***

During this period, the job coach must be attentive, also, to the satisfaction level of the employee and the employer, not letting ambiguous or unsatisfactory situations carry on.

***Anticipate conflicts***

It is also very important that the job coach understands that one of his/her key roles in this stage of the supported employment process is his/her preventive action and, therefore, must know to anticipate with his/her intervention, before conflicts occur. In this regard, he/she must continue to collect the report of the in-charged, where he/she may detect if significant changes that cause any problem occur. But he/she must be aware of the employee's motivation who, after the first months, may decline over time and affect productivity and the quality of work and social relations. This motivational aspect is associated to one that should always be considered, which is the career advancement of the individual, which is increasingly given more importance in supported employment.

***Control the motivation***

***Career advancement***

***Promote positive social interactions***

Social interaction with colleagues is also an essential aspect to be monitored closely during this phase. The job coach must instil in workers he/she accompany that they must be attentive to the needs of their peers (without any disability) and be willing to help and work with them. The availability to work and availability to support peers are two attitudes that contribute to better get a good assessment by the supervisor or manager.

***Functions outside the company***

Outside the company, the job coach will probably be the facilitator of the "circle of support" of the worker and will contribute for the circle to work and thus the central person achieves the targets set in his/her individual plan, for his/her social inclusion and personal development. In this sense, the job coach will promote the family collaboration and positive connections in the community for the impact of employment in real life of the individual to lead him/her to a better quality of life.

***Promote the proper family collaboration***

The involvement of family members, especially parents and brothers/sisters, is a central element in the network of support that help maintaining the employment of people with diverse abilities. During this monitoring stage they should continue supporting the inclusion process under the direction of the job coach who will monitor the motivation of this environment and the adequacy of their collaboration.

To assist to the administration of the salary is an aspect involved in supported employment and also in the job coach role, who cannot remain impassive, for example, when he/she finds that an infantile model of administration is applied.

***Role of the job coach as a social***

Although this social role of the job coach during the following-up stage may occupy a great time of the workday of

**support**

the professional who accompanies a person with diverse abilities, for labour and social inclusion should consider the person as a whole and cannot ignore the social issues that arise as new challenges from employment.

The social implication of the job coach may be questionable in some places, and surely the assumption of this role will depend on the organization of social services in each location, but what is certain is that the person who engages in a job in the ordinary market has taken a decisive step towards full citizenship and has new support and monitoring needs at this stage.

**Watch connections to the community**

During this monitoring stage, one of the elements that will require the attention of the job coach is the whole network of contacts and connections between the individual and the community. This social network will enable the person to be in contact and participate actively in the life of the community. This is an issue of great importance to the socialization of the individual and his/her life experiences that will constitute the ingredients of his/her quality of life.

**Include permanent training**

Finally, another aspect to attend closely during the monitoring stage is the training aspect of the worker, that is, we must include in his/her individual plan some training goals that contribute to his/her career development. With the current global trend of lifelong learning, we must be aware of how many training opportunities are offered to individuals, arranging, if necessary, personalized support he/she requires.

In summary, evaluation and support services that are provided during the follow-up are essential in supported employment and do not consist simply in making a timely telephone monitoring, to see how the worker continues in the job, but it involves a series of functions, with their respective operations, that the job coach must develop during this stage.

These functions can be highlighted summing the following:

**Functions of the job coach during the monitoring**

- Development, motivation and orientation of natural supports.
- Assessment of work performance of the employee.
- Preventive intervention rather than conflict resolution.
- Guidance of the person in his/her professional career.
- Construction of the necessary support in the family and in the community.

## **EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE**

**1) How many hours do you think that the job coach should spend in the company to monitoring a worker with support needs and intellectual disability, in the job coach fading period of the supported employment process?**

3 hours a day

5 hours a day

less than 1 hour

7 hours a day

**2) Which important condition must occur for the job coach to be able to fade from the workplace with guarantees that the worker will maintain the job?**

The employee arrives on time every day to the workplace

The employee has a very good natural support at the workplace

The employee get along very well with everybody in the company

The employee is always well dressed and clean

The employee work a lot without distractions

**3) The monitoring of the job coach regarding the employment of people with psychiatric problems-**

can ever fade

is used to be out of the workplace

must be done by a psychiatrist

\_\_\_ must be done every day at the workplace

**4) Why do you think job coaches are necessary in the supported employment system-**

\_\_\_ Because without them employers would not hire people with support needs

\_\_\_ Because without them people with a disability would not be able to learn the job tasks

\_\_\_ Because they are the professionals who ensure quality and the confidence of employers

\_\_\_ Because they are a cheap human resource for the companies

## 10. 2. How to handle "critical situations" and how to anticipate them.

### **Monitoring demands continuous controls and be based on outcomes**

This follow-up phase, in which the worker is integrated among his/her peers and without the presence of a professional of support, external to the company, is the most extensive stage in time and sets the final position of supported employment: self-reliance and independence of the worker, running the job tasks, and with the natural supports of the environment if necessary. This position will last months and years, if the individual does not change company or job, and it will reflect the success of all the work done so far and will be exponent of a successful outcome of the inclusion system applied.

### **Watching dangers**

For this reason, the job coach must be aware that during this long period of time, the supported worker will be exposed to all kinds of dangers, some of them very subtle, which, if they are not taken into account, can undermine the foundation of the "building" built with such a care. And here we can include, for example, the dangers from routine or lack of motivation, the employee is no longer the initial novelty and the core of attention of peers, he/she is now one more in the team...; or resulting from a poor social relationship that makes peers avoid contact and leave him/her increasingly isolated...; or those from a decrease in quality control of the products or services that the worker does...; and so on.

### **When the system lowers its guard, "critical situations" occur**

All these real dangers result from a lowering of the guard system, which produces a deterioration in processes of certain learned behaviours, with the aggravating circumstance that the deterioration is ignored by the job coach, possibly involved elsewhere in the initial phase of another integration, giving rise to a conflict or a negative outcome. When this happens, we say that a *critical situation* occurs.

### **What is a "critical situation"?**

Serra and Rosselló (2000) define a **critical situation** as "*that which can be caused by many variables, inside or outside the work environment, which affects, directly or indirectly, the performance or labour productivity and threatens the adaptation of the worker to his/her job.*"

### **Practical case**

James was 25 when he started working at a catering company. Neither he nor his family had ever thought he could work in a company like any other ordinary person, since valuations and technical reports said that he was unfit to work in a competitive job, since his skills and abilities (physical, psycho-motor and psychosocial) did not allow him. The report ended by stating: "*avoid manipulative tasks, and his difficulties observed at the psycho-motor level, we recommend his inclusion in a sheltered workshop.*"

James has an intellectual disability from birth. His

neurological examination (at the time of his birth) allowed discovering a spastic tetra-paresis and seizures, which have always been controlled.

But James was included in a supported employment service in 2010 and he signed his first contract, starting a full time job as a "kitchen assistant" in a catering firm. After the task analysis performed by the job coach, it was found that the main tasks to develop, among others, were:

- Assist in the preparation of desserts.
- Seal, laminate or cover terrine of desserts and their placement on the trays.

From the first day, James was very responsible and meticulous when doing his job and, with the help of the job coach took his first days as a 'worker' in a very positive and satisfactory manner, satisfaction, however, that was diminishing as the days passed, mainly because of his job performance. It was quite obvious that James did not reach the standard of production and this involved a bad image of the integration project from some co-workers, as well as a rejection of this kind of contracts and, what was worse, a sense of fear and failure from James.

Analyzing this situation, the job coach found some variables that confirm this fact and explained the low productivity level of James.

- Objectively James performance was decreasing as the day went by. In addition, his motivation and satisfaction degree were declining as the days passed.
- The highest level of productivity was always observed during the first hours of the workday.
- The fact of doing the same job without the possibility of a minimal change within his work area decreased his performance causing fatigue and physical exhaustion.
- The verification by the job coach that, despite the low complexity of learning the task, it involved a speed of execution, something that was not adequately assessed in the task analysis.
- The importance of a continued change for the execution of the task avoiding a decrease in the rate of productivity.

Earlier, at the start of the work activity of James, this task was accomplished by changes among co-workers, being very important these changes for the task.

It is therefore that the job coach was able to design intervention strategies with relevant supporting resources to enable an adequate labour integration, and to improve his productivity level.

First, the change of tasks' proposal was very important within the same work environment, being reflected in the new record of task analysis: increase of the working time in the preparation of desserts, increase of the frequency of relay among peers to perform the specific task of covering the pots. This proposal was fully accepted by the director of the company who always gave support to the integration of James.

Second, the job coach designed intervention strategies to increase the motivation of James and positive reinforcement from peers, and identified potential natural supports within the company (i.e., within his area of work).

Third, the continued support and motivation by the family of James was very important, where emotional stability and the continued strengthening of his members was always present.

Finally, the job coach identified different natural supports: the manager of the company, who fully accepted the proposal of changing the tasks; the peers' support was important, since they were aware of the effort involved to be eight hours in the same position covering the pots; and, with the passage of time, who became the principal natural support of James was the supervisor of the work area (decreasing certain skepticism and rejection of the contract and switching to full acceptance and support).

***Aspects to consider***

In critical situations, to reach positive results, Serra and Rosselló advise to control as objectively as possible the following aspects:

1. The definition of unsuitable or inappropriate behaviour in the work environment.
2. Objective description of the indicators and other variables that define the behaviour maladjusted (thanks to records and other tools, and also to direct observation). Possible consequences and immediate effects which can be derived from this behaviour.
3. Different intervention strategies implemented by each job coach to reduce or eliminate the consequences.
4. Human resources to support the job coach to implement some of the intervention strategies.
5. Results obtained after implementing the proposed measures.

***Conclusion: a preventive action is recommended***

The most important conclusion is that, during the follow-up stage, the job coach's performance must have a fundamentally precautionary measure to avoid critical situations- anticipating consequences and events will save many failures and regrets in the future. In addition, the job coach must associate to this preventive action, agents that

can contribute to the success of the labour integration, such as co-workers, managers or leaders, and family members...

### **10. 3. How to apply a monitoring out of the work environment**

During the follow-up stage, the job coach has almost completely faded his/her physical presence within the company and, in most cases, moves his/her direct contacts with the worker to areas out of the job (read EUSE 2014: *How to Guide n° 4 of EUSE Toolkit for Diversity*). This means, first, that during this phase direct contacts still exist and are not limited at all, to mere phone contacts, like some bad practices of supported employment may believe.

With some groups, for example with people with mental illness, the monitoring out of the work environment may even be the norm throughout the labour inclusion process, supported employment does not always need the physical presence of the job coach in the workplace, and with them the job coach must be able to apply an intensive monitoring of the worker, but not going to the company.

In general, the ideal instrument to use as a guide to implement an effective monitoring out of the work environment, customized to the needs of the worker, is the individual plan of social and labour inclusion, person-centered. This instrument may have different formats, but always sets objectives and areas of work, determined by the accompanied person on his/her journey to full citizenship.

In the monitoring out of the work environment, we will work the objectives set by this individual plan which will change according to the needs of the individual, in job performance, social skills, or career development needs... But we will also take into account in these individual plans, other areas requiring intervention and support, which have a direct influence on the life of the worker, such as, personal autonomy or independent living, emotional life or relationships, and social connections or community involvement, among others.

Whether working with the methodology of the circle of support or not, this individual plan will always be useful for identifying members of the community or social support resources that will contribute to achieving the objectives set, hence the usefulness of this instrument for the job

coach, who becomes at this stage of monitoring the orchestrator of employees and resources identified in the community or in the worker's environment.

The job coach must be concerned with the new challenges that labour and social life will arise to the worker with support needs, especially during this follow-up stage and when he/she has a stable job, but should not bear alone the actions involving those supports nor should create to the worker an absolute dependence of his/her professional figure, id est, you must know how to combine remote support, indirectly, to control the individual's progress in all areas that are working to achieve full citizenship status.

#### **10. 4. Definition of “natural supports”**

There is not a single definition of this important concept, but we like the one provided by the work team of the HELIOS II programme coordinated by Augusto Sousa (1996)<sup>1</sup>-

##### ***Natural supports in different areas of the community and home***

(1) *“Natural support is the support that people of the community can give to people with disabilities in the context of the community and the activities of daily life (work, leisure, public transport, at home, etc.).*

(2) *We define natural support any existing resource in the workplace, in the community or in the house, which has been identified by the job coach (or others), chosen by the worker with significant disabilities, and made accessible by the job coach.”*

##### ***The best method for natural integration***

In the work environment, natural supports could be employers, managers and co-workers, family members and friends or volunteers to play a supportive role in certain circumstances.

##### ***The job coach should work to activate natural supports***

The current global trend of supported employment is to give great importance to natural supports, because they are the resources that can best help the social inclusion of people with significant disabilities, without resorting to artificial elements, foreign to the environment in which they move. In fact, studies show increased levels of integration and stability in supported employment participants when co-workers are involved with the person with significant disabilities (Rogan et al, 1993; Mank et al. , 1997).

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<sup>1</sup> Two definitions by the GROUP 10 of the European programme HELIOS II (coordinated by Augusto Sousa, chairperson of APEA & RUMO Co-operative- Portugal).

If the role of natural supports is extremely important in supported employment, the role of the job coach is important too. With this we mean, quoting Kregel (1994), that we should not oppose these two figures, but both are essential, tend to the same aim, and they complement each other.

***The job coach is attentive to what is typical in the Company and its inner culture***

The current supported employment is no longer based on the omnipresent figure of the job coach, but in order to get a real standardization, is mainly based on natural supports, to adapt the individual to the culture of each company and what is "typical" of the workplace. In these circumstances, the role of the job coach becomes a "support consultant" for the company, but also becomes a trainer or instructor that facilitates the access of the subject to natural supports in the environment, looking for the normal interaction with peers and a natural social inclusion.

The job coach must identify the natural supports available in the workplace, and get into this environment with the mindset that his/her actions must always adapt to what is typical or usual in this work environment. For example, when a worker starts in a company, it is best to follow with our candidate the usual process that the company has for the incorporation of other workers, although providing the job coach, if necessary, the additional support that the candidate needs.

***Follow the usual process of receipt***

We should use, therefore, the standard procedures for receipt in the department of human resources, informational meeting with the manager, initial training by the company, documentary sessions, assigning a guardian of the company, etc., following the guidelines of the company. The job coach can check, then, that the insertion and training process is going well, that his/her worker understands all instructions that are given and he/she has no doubt about how to perform the tasks entrusted to him/her. Otherwise, he/she needs to talk to those responsible for training, with the manager, or with peers in order to solve the dark spots that remain.

***Use the training means of the company***

***There is no need of being an expert to treat the new worker***

What we need to avoid is that the staff that welcomes the new worker believes that to deal with him/her one should be an "expert in disability" or have a degree and experience in this field: depending on the performance of the job coach and according to the functions which he/she assumes, he/she may give rise to co-workers and staff of the company, in general, to take out this conclusion.

***Main function of the job coach: the social inclusion of the worker in the workplace through natural supports***

Therefore, our advice and the current trend of supported employment, is that all that the natural support of the work environment can take should not be taken by the job coach, and the job coach should implement strategies for natural supports to work effectively and permanently. The main function of the job coach is to support the worker to get a quality social inclusion in the workplace, preserving good social relationships with peers, above the correct execution of

tasks.

Before concluding this QUATSEE Course of *Supported Employment*, it should be emphasized that this system of labour inclusion is the result of the addition of the activities of different actors, all acting in the right direction, under the supervision and coordination of the job coach, who is like the promoting agent, guide, consultant and/or mediator in this process.

Without forgetting that the central actor and the main protagonist of supported employment is the person with different capacities or at risk of exclusion, we want to stress that the success of supported employment lies in the effective confluence of energies, from many different actors, as the employer, co-workers, family members and other community members.

The sum of the contributions of these actors -all orchestrated by the job coach- enables the central person to succeed in his/her project of labour and social inclusion. This indicates us that supported employment is essentially a team work, well coordinated and oriented, and in this system there is not a single actor that is or that may act individually, regardless of the set. Therefore, it is important to know that the positive or negative actions of a participating actor affect the whole, but above all, have an ultimate impact on the central person who is making the process of inclusion in the community.

Without further delay, we will focus on the importance of other actors of supported employment -different from the central person and the job coach- these actors are included, sometimes under a common denominator of "natural supports".

## **10. 5. Actors of natural support.**

### **10. 5. A. THE EMPLOYER AND THE COMPANY**

Without a job in the open labour market, supported employment cannot start, therefore it is logical that we first consider the role of the entrepreneur and the company as a prime element in this system, and we highlight the good relations that the support staff and the mediating bodies should have with the employer.

#### **1) The employer's role.**

***The employer should know the initiative of "supported employment"***

- a) The employer must know in which initiative he/she gets involved, therefore, he/she must be well informed from the beginning, to make a firm decision to collaborate on it with all its consequences. The job coach should inspire trust and a collaborative attitude, so that the employer is a positive element, facilitator of the success of the new worker. The employer must ask as many questions as he/she considers and should gather information about the programme or service that is proposed, so that there are no doubts about any aspect of collaboration that is required. If the employer is not clear about in which kind of project he/she becomes involved, or if he/she has not been fully informed of the importance of his/her role in the

whole process, there may be surprises later, ruining the experience, with the first serious problem that is presented.

***The employer wants solutions and gives opportunities***

b) The employer wants his/her company to work and staff, whether disabled or not, works well and with interest; therefore, he/she does not usually want more problems but solutions. So, he/she must see clearly that the initiative of supported employment is contemplated so that it facilitates the process of inclusion of the new worker and this formula provides effective solutions, realizing that the whole initiative will be positive for the company and successfully evaluating the services offered.

***The alliance in co-operation will bring success***

c) The employer shall co-operate positively and will be an ally of the professionals of support, if they seek the success of the company with the inclusion of new workers with disabilities or from a disadvantaged situation. Therefore, professionals should be also allies of the employer and, honestly, he/she will be helped with this experience to his/her company to get better results.

***The Employer contributes to improve society***

d) The employer will discover, among other things that supported employment offers a wonderful opportunity to give meaning to the corporate social responsibility (CSR) an item that forces all employers and highlights the social role of business in society. All managements advice companies that have solved this commitment to society and to do so consistently and effectively. Some companies broadcast their performances of cooperation with altruistic causes of social or ecological type, giving rise to what is called *social marketing*. Anyway, supported employment, with its projects and initiatives, fits perfectly in this context and it is good to take this culture of social cooperation to promote implementation and development in most companies.

## **2) Relations of the job coach with the employer.**

It is important to note two things here:

***Positive relationships without a wasting of time***

- *We need to establish positive and constructive relations.* Do not confuse the entrepreneur with a social worker or an NGO, for this reason, we should only hold the meetings that are strictly necessary for the benefit of the organization, and meetings must be carefully prepared, so as to get to the core issues, reaching conclusions or concrete solutions. On the way to conduct meetings that affect us, the employer will have an idea of us and will assess whether or not we are well integrated into the operative culture and practice of his/her business.

***Provide services of:***

- *We must give or provide services that meet the needs of the employer:*

- Information,** ➤ Faithful and updated information on any item of interest to the employer: types of more profitable contracts, incentives and fiscal benefits, projects in collaboration with the public authorities, marketing or social impact, availability to the media, if necessary, etc.
- Guidance,** ➤ Guidance and counseling, to improve production and quality in human relationships within the company: cite testimonies of employers who report about the improvement of internal climate in human relationships, when a disabled person is included.
- Training** ➤ Training and instruction of direct co-workers: inform about the training role of the professional of support as to the entire staff, and about the value of co-operation and the role that partners will acquire in this experience.
- and**
- Technical supports** ➤ Technical, strategic and preventive supports so that the experience develops normally and is perceived within the company as another natural incorporation: how to give individualized technical support, how to incorporate co-workers and tutor to the support, which kind of technical adjustments are required, which final scenario is contemplated, etc.

**Beneficial experience to the company**

Overall, the innovative experience of supported employment for the company, with the intervention of external professionals, should seek the co-operation of the staff of the company and the employer should assess it as beneficial and should feel supported and well guided along the entire process. If so, we will say that the experience was a success and that the employer shall maintain in the future an open mind to hire new workers by this system. But if not, the employer will value the experience as a failure.

For more information read in EUSE Toolkit for Diversity (2014), the position paper *Working with Employers*.

#### **PRACTICAL ASSIGNMENT:**

The employer may feel little or very motivated to participate in a supported employment experience-

Make a table with two lists (one positive and other negative) with the factors or reasons that you think influence the employer to hire and participate in a supported employment experience.

#### **10. 5. B. CO-WORKERS the most important natural support in integrated employment**

For any new employee who starts in a company, co-workers play an essential role in the success or failure of this new incorporation. This is also applied when the employee has a disability.

***Expert on the inner matters of the company***

Peers are those who know best how things work in the company, what is the rate of production, how the chief wants to do the tasks, etc... The new worker will have to be well accepted and will have to be informed, first, how everything works, to be comprehending as he/she gains confidence and learns to do his/her duties.

***The job coach should never inhibit a natural support***

The job coach should never impersonate a co-worker; if in a work environment a fellow thinks to him/herself: "*What the job coach is teaching to this new boy, I would teach him better*"... is a clear indication of intrusion or invasion of competences that cause "inhibition" of a positive natural support, and this is precisely what a job coach should never has to do, but the opposite: to promote natural supports in the workplace.

***Permanent support***

***The job coach applies strategies for the effectiveness of natural supports***

Peers are daily with the new employee, throughout the workday, and are, moreover, who will remain in this environment, when the job coach has faded from the company, they are who provide support to the disabled worker. Therefore, if the job coach got along well with co-workers, has trained them in how to relate and treat the new worker, has positively reinforced their collaboration and support, if he/she has know how to drive well the process of mutual acceptance and inclusion, the success on the fading of the job coach is guaranteed (see at the end of this section, Tables 1 and 2)

And this is the purpose of supported employment: integrate a worker with support needs in a company of the community, with the support of co-workers.

***Coworkers in the circle of support***

It would be optimal that a co-worker participates as a volunteer in the circle of support developed around a disabled person, this would prove a high availability and commitment. And this would facilitate that this fellow knew the objectives that the central person is pursuing in life and the long road that lies ahead. So, he/she would much better understand the importance of employment in the whole life of the worker with diverse abilities.

If this level of commitment cannot be reached, we must try to get from co-workers and managers as maximum cooperation as possible in what each one can bring for the labour inclusion to be positive and of quality.

***Mutual alliance between the job coach and co-workers, central person and co-workers***

And this is where we must highlight the technical work of the job coach. Summarizing, we can say that his/her role is reduced to inform, observe, train and reinforce co-workers, so that they understand the importance of support and the different ways of giving it, as well as the need to include the

new employee in the culture of each company.

In Tables 3 and 4 you will find a brief list of activities of natural support that co-workers can make in the workplace, and some questions posed by natural supports in relation to the functions to be assumed by the job coach.

Strategies of the job coach to promote natural support at the workplace

To promote social inclusion (1)

- ⤴ JC solves some fears expressed by co-workers
- ⤴ JC promotes good relationships among all colleagues
- ⤴ JC profits any opportunity for the supported worker assists to other co-workers or collaborates with them
- ⤴ JC identifies appropriate times to promote interaction among colleagues- on arriving and leaving the company, at coffee-breaks, etc.
- ⤴ JC proposes changes in doing tasks if this improves social interaction

**Table 1.** Strategies of the job coach (F. Serra, 2004).

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Strategies of the job coach to promote natural support at the workplace

To promote social inclusion (2)

- ⤴ JC starts some topics to talk if they not affect to the work production
- ⤴ JC reinforces positively co-workers behaviours of natural support
- ⤴ JC talks about the influence of beeing employed into the quality of life
- ⤴ JC highlights positive aspects or activities done by the supported worker in and out of the workplace
- ⤴ JC teaches the co-workers to appropriately reinforce the work done by the supported colleague

**Table 2.** Strategies of the job coach (F. Serra, 2004).

**Table 3.** Co-workers as natural supports.  
(Adapted by Howton Ford, 1995)

Functions	Activities
➤ Provide a model for the professional and social action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Demonstrate techniques and strategies to complete tasks adapting to the expectations.</li> <li>◆ Encourage workers to observe and act the same way.</li> </ul>
➤ Help to complete tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Provide support / assistance to complete tasks during some days or according to the difficulty of the task.</li> </ul>
➤ Teach tasks and skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ As in most jobs: workers with more experience help the new ones to learn the job.</li> </ul>
➤ Evaluate the job and provide feedback on work performance and social skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Supervise the work periodically.</li> <li>◆ Provide feedback and reinforcement systematically.</li> <li>◆ Be a reference to the disabled worker before potential problems may arise.</li> </ul>
➤ Provide social support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Introduce the worker to other peers.</li> <li>◆ Explain expectations and what is intended.</li> <li>◆ Be an equal partner.</li> </ul>
➤ Act as an advisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Minimize or avoid confrontations</li> <li>◆ Control the assignment of the less desirable tasks.</li> </ul>

**Table 4.** Main questions on natural support (Kregel, 1994).

1. HAS THE NATURAL SUPPORT CHANGED THE CONCEPT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT?	<p><b>NO.</b></p> <p>The basic assumptions on which the model of supported employment is based on have not changed, although it has been expanded to include new technical services. People with disabilities want to work in real jobs, and the model provides the framework for achieving this goal.</p>
2. CAN THE USE OF LABOUR AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT FACILITATE THE CHOICE TO THE USER?	<p><b>YES.</b></p> <p>The evolution of supported employment from the person-centered approach, with the choice of opportunities and optional support is the next logical step to seek a modality of stable and effective services. Using labour and community support enables users to conduct their own careers and choose the types of assistance they want to receive.</p>
3. CAN THE NATURAL SUPPORT ELIMINATE THE NEED FOR A JOB COACH?	<p><b>NO.</b></p> <p>As supported employment is developing to incorporate the users to choice initiatives and a variety of new technical supports, the role of the job coach becomes increasingly critical. Clearly, the community and labour support does not automatically find the resources for individuals with significant disabilities. The job coach is the only person who has the skills to identify and match the support hunting, and assistance with the accessibility of services, he/she also evaluates the efficacy and offers alternatives for every need that arises.</p>
4. WILL THE NEEDS OF	<p><b>YES.</b></p>

USERS BE DELAYED WITH THE NATURAL AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT?

Each user needs a certain type of assistance and a certain level of support in each different process of supported employment. For example, an individual in need of intensive instruction in a job can choose: a co-worker to teach the task; the job coach to teach other things; family to take care of the transportation; (...) a friend to help to decipher the payroll; a cafeteria worker to help during meals, etc...

**NO.**

5. CAN USERS HAVE ACCESS TO NATURAL AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT BY THEMSELVES?

These sources of support that are possible within the regular working framework, do not happen naturally with people with significant disabilities. In fact, if a support exists in the environment does not mean that the user can benefit from it. It is not odd that an individual ignores the potential of a support, or how to choose between different alternatives, or how to access to a desired support. It is important for using a variety of options the role of the job coach, who helps the user to identify, select and access the necessary support for any level of assistance.

### **10. 5. C. FAMILY MEMBERS AND OTHER COMMUNITY ACTORS**

***Family and Friends also present in the circle of support***

Finally, it should be noted the importance of family and friends, as natural supports, who contribute, from the circle of support, for the central person to keep his/her job and advance in his/her career.

***Family influences on the learning of behaviours and attitudes***

Supported employment cannot start without the unconditional support of the family. Especially with a child or brother/sister with intellectual disability, we must take into account the past history of the individual, in which there will surely be given infantile, overprotective or patronizing attitudes, which have had an impact on learning of self-determination and therefore in his/her ability to lead an independent and self-sufficient life.

***Count with the collaboration of the family***

Although the goal we want to reach is valid, we always have to keep our feet on the ground and we have to count with the support elements within the family, so that the path undertaken by the supported person reaches success. If the family is opposed to the leap to the community, leaving the sheltered workshop, for instance, it will be very difficult for the job coach to impose his/her criteria, in fact, he/she should not do it. Before, he/she must plan a few actions to try to change the attitude of the family.

***"Parent to parent" strategies***

Professionals of support can use "parent to parent" strategies to help the undecided parents to decide to let their son or daughter to participate on a supported employment programme. These strategies may include:

- a) excursions to have the opportunity to chat and ask things informally;
- b) round tables for the presentation of the experience of many parents;

- c) personal encounters of two couples: an hesitant and a convinced (with a son/daughter already in supported employment);
- d) visit a worker discreetly that already had a supported employment job in any company or entity;
- e) attend to the screening of a documentary or video with the presentation of exemplary cases of supported employment;
- f) etcetera.

***Sign a partnership agreement***

The essential thing is that the family decides to participate and discover the importance of collaboration in the process of labour and social insertion of their child or brother/sister. Once discovered their role, they must consent to participate under the direction of the job coach so that all interventions are appropriate. Here some bodies make the family to sign a partnership agreement.

Why do we need to sign a partnership agreement?

***Proper interventions***

Because we should solemnize or ritualize what is an important and crucial component of the process for the mediating organisation and because, in practice, family involvement has to be in perspective: not too little, not too much. For example, family members, as a rule, should never appear in the company of their son/daughter, as well as they should not open his/her mail that comes home or they should not invade other areas of privacy.

***Family is a support element to the whole plan***

The family members who live together can have a very beneficial role for the progress of the supported family member in his/her working life, for example:

- must assist or monitor the worker member to wake up on time, to wash and to arrive in good conditions to work;
- can cooperate to solve transportation problems that may arise;
- have a key role in the positive reinforcement of correct behaviours and attitudes of workers in different work situations;
- are an essential and emotional support that act as a representative of positive and negative events occurring during the workday, allowing the relief and exercising an almost therapeutic function, which serves to reinforce positive attitudes to work and to provide security and confidence to the worker;
- should work in matters of economic management that concern to progressive autonomy of the worker, depending on the individual plan to be agreed;
- should encourage the steps that the worker wants to give towards self-determination, his/her independent living and towards his/her emancipation.

***Brothers and sisters***

By now, you surely have realized that we continually refer to family members, in plural, and we do this because we

***as contributors of the individual plan***

include, as very important, brothers and sisters. If supported employment seeks the inclusion of the person in the community, we must consider that the family unit is the first community, the most intimate, therefore, brothers and sisters who live in it should be interested in including him/her and participate in the process of access to full citizenship through an integrated employment.

Consequently, pro-active brothers and sisters play a very important role, along with parents, and are a resource of natural support for socialization and to contribute to the progress of the individual plan.

***Participation of other members of the community***

The same could be said of other community members, as friends, more distant relatives, neighbours and significant people in the life of the disabled person, who must always be present, as natural resources, giving them support functions very specific. These people are especially profitable when the central person has formed a circle of support or advances through a written individual plan, which normally distributes commitments or activities to perform, and requires the intervention of many human resources of the community.

## **PRACTICAL ACTIVITY**

Define with your own words **what are natural supports** in the supported employment system. Give us five examples.

## **LAST RECOMMENDATIONS**

We can be satisfied with the path taken so far and the results achieved with this course. But the task is not finished yet, we lack this final section we are now beginning. Here we will see some aspects that a service provider of supported employment can never forget. We'll see the quality issue and its indicators, and the links that a supported employment service should have at a local, national and international level.

### **10. 6. THE IMPORTANCE OF QUALITY INDICATORS IN THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SYSTEM.**

#### ***Quality, a booming concept***

In today's society is not enough to produce goods or services but also, they must be of quality, if we want them to be accepted in the market and reach more consumers. In the field of social services is the same, the quality is a concept that today affects any organization that claims to be modern and wants to adapt its services and processes to the needs of its customers, even affecting its image, its internal communication, and the restructuring of its policy.

Applying David Mank (1996) concept of quality to supported employment, we should consider the following aspects:

#### 1) Quality can always be improved:

#### ***Quality can always improve***

The results of supported employment are never static, they are affected by multiple influences of the market, economy, the attitude of employers and colleagues, the legislative framework, the support of the family, the attitude of the worker, the effectiveness of learning procedures, etc. There will always be a chance to improve the performance of any of these influential factors.

People in supported employment are not static but, rather, evolve and progress toward new goals that will improve their current situation: they do not resign themselves with the same job, nor want to do the same functions always, nor want to keep for a long time the lowest occupational category of the ladder...

People tend to always want to improve their social life, which is reflected more strongly when the individual begins to have an income to allow him/her to participate more and better in the life of the community. The job coach should always be aware of this demand, which influences undoubtedly, in the quality of life of people.

The mediating entity providing supported employment services cannot ignore the new demands of its customers and should get adapted to them offering changing and effective services. The organization, therefore, can always improve the

way in which services are served.

2) Quality is defined by the clients:

***Clients define quality***

The organization can and should set goals and employment outcomes, according to its previous assessment, environmental circumstances, funding pressures, etc., but individuals and their families are who ultimately will tell whether these goals or outcomes and quality are satisfactory for their lives.

Moreover, in each place or culture, communities can define differently what they mean by quality, and this always requires to organizations to adapt to the reality of what they define and want those who use their services.

3) Quality is the result of a team work:

***Team work***

An organization with a united staff provides the highest quality services, especially if the organization provides human services in which different professionals are involved. In providing services, knowledge, experience and skill of the staff are added. In addition, supported employment, as we have seen, cannot achieve good results if all agents in the team with a shared vision and mission and with the same plan of action do not converge. If problems are shared and an attitude of collaboration between all participants is given, the quality objectives will be easier to get.

4) The mission is the driving force of quality:

***The mission is the driving force***

The mission of the employment service must be clearly defined and should focus on satisfactory employment outcomes to people with disabilities and from a disadvantaged situation. The mission is like the compass of an organization that serves to indicate which direction to move. If you have a well written and clear mission, the staff will make it theirs more easily and unambiguously interpreted, impacting positively on the quality of services. Also, if the mission is well defined, when the organization periodically reviews its performance, it shall check if deviation occurs in the course of their actions.

5) Quality requires to gather information well:

***Gathering information system***

Every organization should have a good data collection system that allows analyzing its services. In our case, the service must collect the most significant quantitative data on employment outcomes achieved. It is necessary to record accurate data periodically, to analyze them and make decisions that are proper and which influence the improvement of services.

**QUALITY INDICATORS IN SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT**

**Supported employment has a great scientific con-signature**

Supported employment is a system of labour inclusion that has much research on behind supporting its effectiveness and reliability. Furthermore, it is a system that has created an associative movement worldwide to promote its dissemination, ensure its principles and the quality of its implementation, and to serve as a platform for discussion and the incorporation of new developments that improve the entire system.

**APSE and EUSE establish quality indicators**

Fortunately, supported employment has nearly thirty years of development and the major associations that promoted it, have had time to establish indicators that demonstrate the quality of its practice. Among these bodies, there are two that represent an authoritative voice in this sector: the APSE and EUSE. The first one, the *Association for Persons in Supported Employment*, with its headquarters in the U.S.A., and the second one, the *European Union of Supported Employment*, which represents the associations of supported employment in Europe. These two bodies have developed a battery of quality indicators covering all aspects of this system.

The APSE divides into three blocks the quality indicators:

**APSE:**

- **Addressees** 1) The first refers to individuals receiving supported employment services, there are 15 direct indicators, written in present, to make it easier to check if they are now in our entity, and in which people or individuals are always the subject of the sentence.
- **Staff** 2) The second block refers to staff working in supported employment, providing support, training and mediation services. There are 21 indicators covering the transition from school age to procedures to develop in working life, not forgetting the extension of services to facilitate the inclusion of people in the community.
- **Organization** 3) The third block includes 17 quality indicators relating to organizational aspects, which always influence and have much to do with the provision of supported employment services.

**EUSE**

The EUSE has published in 2005, after a good work, a Framework of Quality Standards for supported employment services. Indicators are grouped into three sections referring to: the organization, process, and outcomes. The novelty in this paper is that each quality standard has its indicators and these have their tangible sources, which are the materials, instruments or documents that attest to the practice of the indicator.

The framework of EUSE's quality standards can be consulted in <http://www.euse.org> and look for the document "Information Booklet and Quality Standards."

Finally we highlight the synthesis of these quality indicators in the next three slides.

## **I- Outcomes of Supported Employment**

- Paid employment in open labour market, appropriate salary and labour contract, stable employment
  - Job meets preferences, resources and competences of the person
  - The worker is valued as part of the team work
  - Career plan is feasible
- 

## **II - The process of Supported Employment**

- The job seeker is involved in taking decisions. Individual Action Plan
  - Good communication and collaboration among all agents (family, professionals,...)
  - Confidentiality
  - Lifelong permanent training, career advancement
  - Support and co-operation on and off the job, natural support
- 

## **III – Structure of Supported Employment Service**

- Skills and competences of job coaches
- Working framework of supported employment services
- External relationships
- National and regional framework of supported employment

## 10. 7. ESSENTIAL LOCAL CONNECTIONS THAT A SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICE SHOULD HAVE.

### **Public Administrations**

It is essential to be well related to **Public Administrations**, especially with those that hold the competence in terms of employment, not only because they are often the main source of funding for the services, but also because they can facilitate the job finding and growth, in the sense that if you there is signed a partnership agreement, this can help in attracting companies. In addition, the Public Employment Service should be aware of the quality services that the organization provides to people with diverse abilities, and should be a reference in networking.

### **Business organizations and trade unions**

A supported employment service should be well connected to **business organizations and workers**, and here all we include representative bodies such as employers' associations in different sectors, the chamber of commerce, associations of young entrepreneurs, the various unions, etc. And being well related to such disparate entities means to participate in the conferences they organize, attend to training courses and activities...

### **Press, radio, television**

It is desirable to maintain good relations with the **local media**, so that you can do the publicity of your projects, participate in any radio or television programme, which always contributes to create a climate of opinion.

### **Other citizen entities**

It is also desirable to maintain relationships with other **citizen entities** whether or not they provide their services to other of people with disabilities. You should be offered to collaborate on study tables, participate in the drafting of sectoral strategic plans, work with neighbourhood associations, citizen and cultural forums, etc.

### **Universities**

Finally, do not forget the relations with **the universities**. Supported employment offers much material for research and, however, in Europe it has not been found enough. Hence the importance of supported employment services to sign a partnership agreement or arrangement with universities to promote research on the variables that influence the success or failure of people with disabilities and other groups in the open labour market. Studies may focus on the labour field, on the social field, on the natural supports, on family intervention, on the involvement of business, but also on the necessary technical assistance, on the useful and original adaptations, and even on the cost-effectiveness of these programmes, compared to traditional services.

## 10. 8. INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORK OF THE WORLDWIDE MOVEMENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT.

### **Legal framework**

In our environment, people with disabilities and others from a disadvantaged situation who require support to work in any company of the community, that is, to participate in society as a citizen with full rights, they cannot opt to the support services they need because **funding is not considered in the legislation** of the countries generally speaking. This causes that supported employment is not considered yet in many countries as a widespread option and an eligible service, that is, available to any citizen who wants to use them, as the International Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UN, 2006) states in the article 27.

### **State funding**

In contrast, in Europe, it is allocated, however, since many years ago, huge amount of money for funding places in sheltered workshops and other care facilities. Which makes that these segregated resources are an eligible option for parents, associations and organizations even when they are established in a opposite direction to the mandate of the UN Convention.

This happens after 30 years of showing that the supported employment labour inclusion system is effective, and is needed by many people and their families, and even after knowing that it is cheaper than sheltered employment or traditional system (R. Cimera, 2008, 2011a, 2011b and 2012).

There are **significant advances** recently, which suggest that in the very near horizon, supported employment could become a legal service option in Europe regulated in several countries.

It would be fair that supported employment did not depend on occasional funds or grants, but its cost was envisaged in the Law on General Budget of the States. And this requires the legal regulation of this system of integrated employment.

In some countries, the Governments have begun to consider supported employment as an eligible option for including it in the annual call for proposals for labour inclusion. And this is fine, but not enough. We believe this is a way sufficiently important and promising for the future, to be considered by the Ministry of Labour in every country, which is the institution responsible for labour legislation.

### **EUSE**

In Europe there is **the European Union of Supported Employment (EUSE)**, whose members are national associations of all continental countries, whether they

are part of the European Union or not. Currently the secretariat of this European organization is in Northern Ireland, its web site address is: <http://www.euse.org>

**APSE &  
WASE**

In addition, there are many others, mainly in countries with a longer tradition and development of supported employment, which, like the U.S.A. APSE, is much active. Globally, there is the **World Association of Supported Employment (WASE)**, which already has a global dimension and moves in scenarios of I.L.O. and United Nations and organizes intercontinental events.

***Workers are the main  
agents of supported  
employment***

Finally, it should be remembered that these bodies work to achieve a more inclusive society and that the main actors of this international movement are the workers with significant disabilities and other citizens from a disadvantaged situation who have accepted the challenge of inclusion, breaking barriers and developing an active role in society, like the other citizens.

## **EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE**

### **1) Of the following competences of a job coach which one do you think is the most important to support people in a Supported Employment Service?**

- to have a consistent academic background
- to be accessible and available all day
- to get along well with employers and participants
- to know assistive technology and to be a good teacher

### **2) Which is the most important condition to succeed in critical situations?**

- To analyse all the factors that cause them
- To avoid them by acting as soon as possible
- To have a co-worker or tutor at the workplace to inform the job coach when there is any problem
- The employee is aware that his/her behaviour is not appropriate
- To have signed a collaboration agreement between the participant and the job coach

### **3) Do you think the circle of support is the most useful strategy for-**

- career advancement
- maintaining employment
- gaining human resources to develop a customized action plan
- getting the employer satisfaction

**4) If you were working at a Supported Employment Service which external contacts should be the most important and frequent?-**

\_\_\_ To participant's family members

\_\_\_ To employers and employer's organizations

\_\_\_ To public and private organizations that fund the service

\_\_\_ To government institutions or Town Council

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