

**Inclusive Practices for
Neurodivergent staff and
staff with disabilities**

FIRST ST SW

100

INDEPENDENCE SW
UNIT

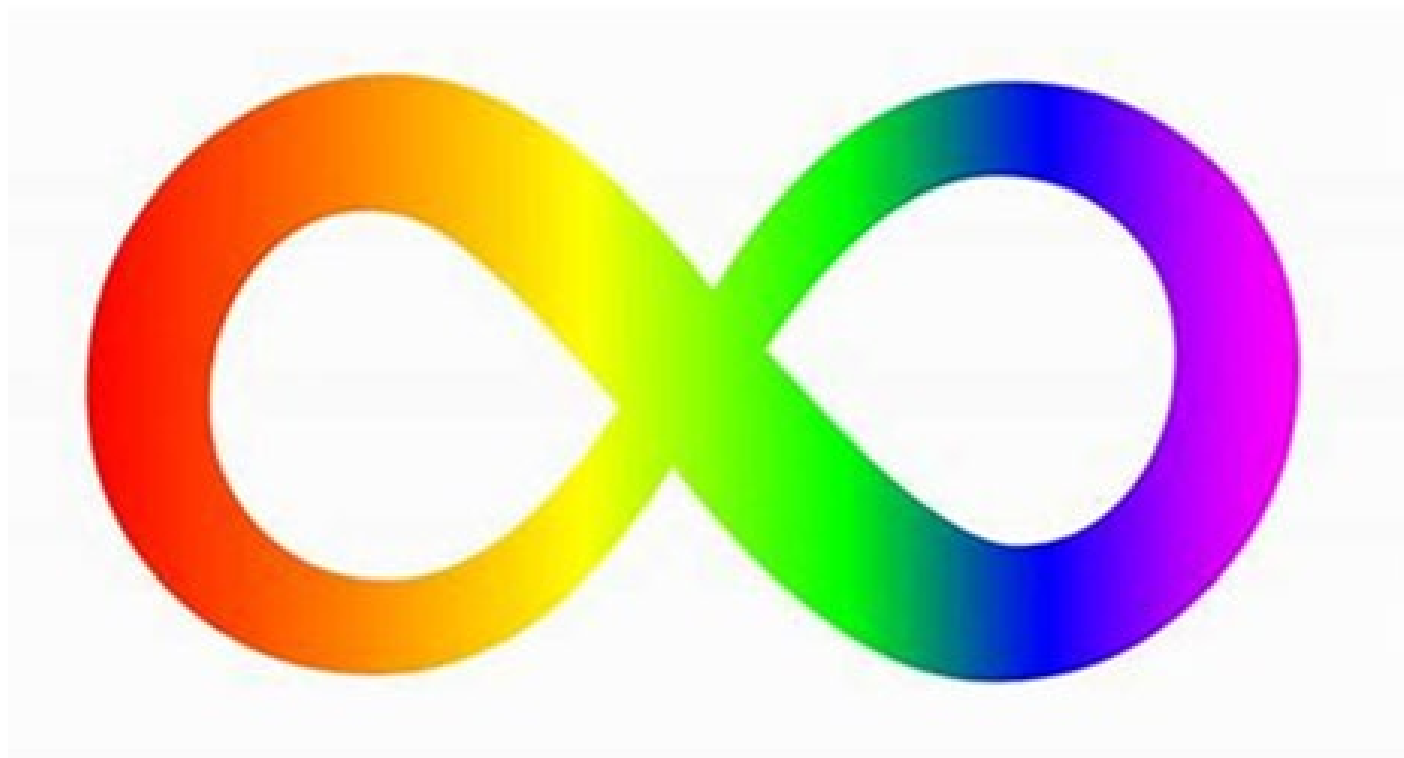
Independent Living Centers

The Independent Living movement in the 1970's led to the creation of the Centers for Independent Living (CILs). Inspired by the civil rights movement's nonviolent civil disobedience, disability activists fought, and continue to fight, for the right to live independently in the community.

An ILC provides, at a minimum, the following core services:

- 1. Information & referral**
- 2. Independent living skills training**
- 3. Individual and systems advocacy**
- 4. Peer support**
- 5. Transition assistance**
 - From nursing homes and other institutions to community-based residences.**
 - Assisting individuals to avoid institutional placement.**
 - Transition of youth with significant disabilities after completion of secondary education to postsecondary life.**

What is Neurodiversity?



Neurodiversity is the idea that differences in a person's brain may mean that they experience the world differently.

- **Autism, dyslexia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia, dyspraxia, ADHD**
- **Chronic pain, mental health**

83%

**Estimated Unemployment rate of adults on the
Autism Spectrum, ages 18-27**

(Source: DIRECTEMPLOYERS.org, Autism Speaks)

Obligations and Compliance

ADA Title I - Employment

- **Applies to employers that have 15 or more employees, including state/local governments, employment agencies, and labor unions.**
- **Employers must provide people with disabilities an equal opportunity to benefit from the employment-related opportunities available to others. This includes things like recruitment, hiring, promotions, training, pay, and social activities.**

Title II – State and Local Government Services

- State and local governments must provide people with disabilities an equal opportunity to benefit from all of their programs, services, and activities.
 - E.g. public education, transportation, recreation, healthcare, social services, courts, voting, emergency services, town meetings.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

- **Prevents discrimination in employment, access to services, and benefits for individuals based on their disability by organizations and governments that receive federal funding.**

IEPs

- **Individualized Education Program**
- **Established through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).**
- **Are a written plan that details free special education services and supports to meets an individual students unique needs.**

What's the difference?

- **Within a school context, a 504 is a plan for how the school will provide free supports and remove barriers so a student can learn alongside their peers. A student may qualify under 504 without necessarily being eligible for IEP services.**

IPEs

- **Are Individualized Employment Plans under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).**
- **They offer an roadmap to identify employment goals and objectives and to assist in developing an appropriate combination of supportive services in order for the individual to achieve their goals.**

Attitudinal Barriers

The major barriers to achievement by people with disabilities in our society continue to be attitudinal barriers, stereotypical thinking, and assumptions about what people can and can't do.

How does this affect your application review and interviewing process?

With & Without

Our society unfortunately spends a lot of time categorizing the “problems” of those it considers outside of the normal.

- “Assistive Technology is for those with disabilities”.
- “A person with achondroplasia has a functional **deficit**”.

I wear clothes, shoes, and glasses. I sit in chairs and I drive to work. I use a step-stool when I **need** to reach something in the cabinet above my refrigerator. These are not deficits, they are responses to environment.

The Basics

(Orca)



<https://www.collective-evolution.com/2015/07/17/video-orca-whale-its-entire-family-show-phenomenal-appreciation-after-rescue/>

The Basics



<http://awesomeocean.com/whales/orca-whales-smashing-comeback/>



<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00zj1q5>

Say That To Say What

- **All groups and cultures are not monolithic**

Say That To Say What

**Cultural norms,
communication
styles and
expectations**

Sensory Sensitivity and
information overload

Which do you think wins?

Obligations and Compliance

Mission, vision, goals, expectations

Clear definitions are essential (e.g. EDIA, what do each of those mean to the organization)

Need to be relevant and measurable (feedback possible and evaluated, even exit interviews!)

Think job descriptions and expectations

**Essential functions of the job are essential
(and protective!)**

Essential Functions

In order to be qualified for a position, an applicant or employee must be able to perform essential job functions. Essential functions are job duties that are fundamental to the position, they are the reason the job exists. Some of the factors for determining essential functions of a job include:

- Whether the position exists specifically to perform these essential functions.
- The number of other employees who are available to perform the same job duties.
- The expertise or skills required to perform the essential functions.

Don't forget to truly consider attitudinal barriers and biases when developing essential functions

Accommodations

Any change to the application or hiring process, to the job, to the way the job is done, or the work environment that allows a person with a disability who is qualified for the job to perform the essential functions of that job and enjoy equal employment opportunities.

Accommodations are considered “reasonable” if they do not create an undue hardship or a direct threat.

Disclosure of disability must be made.

Processes need to be CLEAR and KNOWN.

Reasonable Accommodations

Examples:

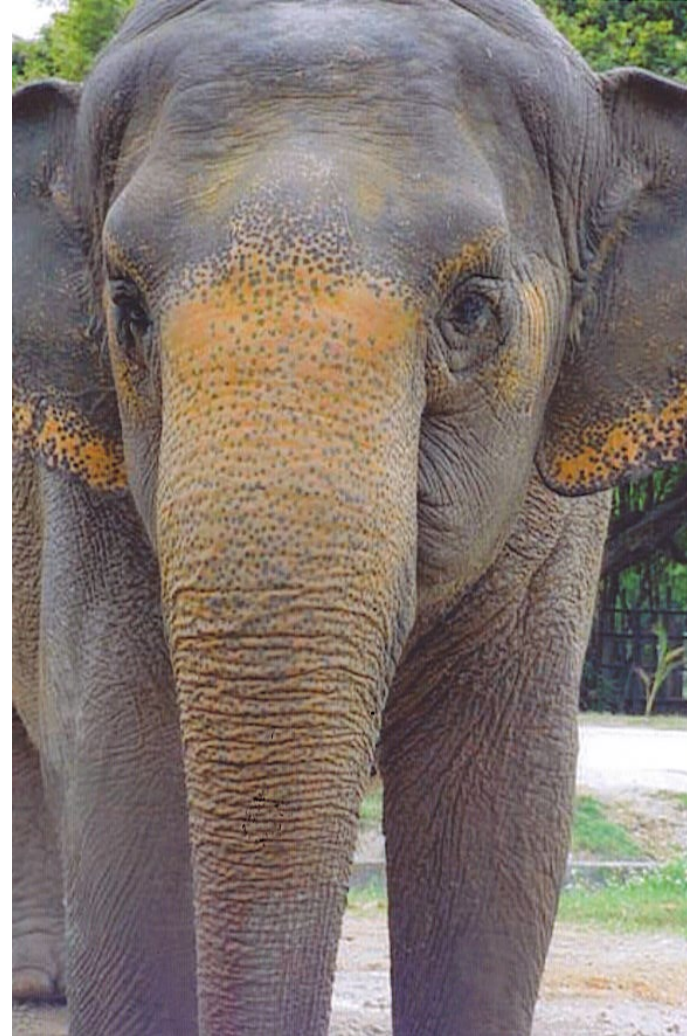
- **Change job tasks**
- **Provide reserved parking**
- **Improve accessibility in a work area**
- **Change the presentation of tests and training materials**
- **Provide or adjust a product, equipment, or software**
- **Allow a flexible work schedule**
- **Provide an aid or a service to increase access**
- **Reassign to a vacant position**

Reasonable Accommodations

Examples for folks who are neurodiverse:

- **Sensory Breaks**
- **Visual Schedules**
- **Quiet Spaces**
- **Noise Cancelling Headphones**
- **Fidgets**
- **Preferential Seating**
- **Peer Mentors**
- **Assistive Technology**
- **Flexible work schedules**
- **Provide an aid or a service to increase access**

African And Asian Elephants



The Big Idea

Every TASK, INTERACTION, and ENVIRONMENT has expectations.

Individuals and Staff both need training and practice.

Takeaways

- 1. Mission, vision, policies, principles, practices, processes and procedures need to be clearly defined and articulated**
- 2. Measurability and reportability are crucial**
- 3. Compliance with accessibility and disability standards must be maintained**
- 4. Clear expectations are established and shared**
- 5. Training will most likely be required**
- 6. GET FEEDBACK FROM PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**
- 7. Innovation and creativity should be fostered (change the model)**

Questions?



Resources

ADA National Network – www.adata.org

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) – www.askjan.org

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

ADA Information Line – 800-669-4000 (Voice)

800-669-6820 (TTY)

www.eeoc.gov



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