Myth vs fact

Down Syndrome Queensland



MYTH: I WILL HAVE TO PAY SOMEONE TO HELP THE PERSON WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY WHILE THEY WORK.

FACT: ALL NEW STAFF MEMBERS REQUIRE A CERTAIN LEVEL OF TRAINING AND OVERSIGHT WHEN THEY START AT A NEW JOB. THIS IS A USUAL AND EXPECTED PART OF THE ONBOARDING PROCESS. DEPENDING ON A PERSON'S CAPACITY AND PREVIOUS WORK EXPERIENCES, PEOPLE WITH AN INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY MAY NEED SOME EXTRA TIME TO BECOME PROFICIENT IN THEIR NEW JOB. THERE ARE SOME THINGS THAT YOU CAN DO TO MAKE THIS PROCESS SMOOTHER:

Use Visuals

People with intellectual disability can sometimes struggle to remember procedures that have multiple steps. Visuals can be printed and provided to the person to assist with sequencing and remembering tasks. This could be either provided in pictures or words depending on the person's communication preferences. Visuals help all staff to remember procedures and sequences so will be useful to many staff in the workplace.

Support Communication

Being able to communicate in a workplace is important and all people have their particular preferences when it comes to communication. Communicating with a person with intellectual disability is not difficult or hard but may require you to think differently. Here are some communication tips you should consider:

·Avoid the use of jargon or sarcasm. These can be tricky for people with intellectual disability to understand and they may take things more literally than you intend.

·Give people time to think and answer. It is normal to try and fill silence when in a conversation, but people with intellectual disability may need a bit of extra time to think before they respond. It is up to you to get comfortable in the silence.

·People with intellectual disability generally have better receptive than expressive language which means that they will often understand more than they can express. This can be further compromised if they feel sick or upset. Having visuals on hand to support communication or learning a few simple key word signs (if the person communicates that way) can be quite helpful.

Use Easy Read

Easy read is a method of writing that utilizes clear, everyday English in conjunction with images to convey meaning. This way of writing has been shown to be inclusive and allows people with intellectual disability to be more independent in the workplace.

PEOPLE WITH AN INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY WHO ARE EMPLOYED IN A SUPPORTIVE AND INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE, AND WHO ARE GIVEN SUPPORT TO LEARN THEIR JOB WELL, CAN AND WILL LEARN THE TASKS OF THEIR JOB AND REQUIRE LESS SUPPORT. IF A PERSON DOES NEED TO BRING A SUPPORT PERSON TO WORK, THIS IS SOMETIMES POSSIBLE THROUGH THEIR NDIS FUNDING. THE GOAL IS ALWAYS TO BUILD CAPACITY SO THIS SUPPORT CAN EVENTUALLY FADE OUT.