Workplace Policies and Practices Influencing Individual’s Access to Accommodations

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NASEM Committee Questions

- Do employers provide access to the assistive devices as workplace reasonable accommodations (and whether employers provide the devices for specific circumstances, or if the devices are universally available)?
- Identify the prevalence of the selected assistive device use by specific physical or mental disorders.
- Identify the prevalence of the selected assistive device use by age of people with physical or mental disorders.
- Information about access to and availability of the selected assistive devices in the current health care and rehabilitation environment, such as the nationwide (rural, suburban, and urban) access to and availability of the selected assistive devices; product maintenance, repair and replacement processes, and costs for the selected assistive devices; and how people with disabilities gain financial access to the selected assistive devices.
- Information/data about access to products and technologies as part of workplace accommodations.

Presentation Overview

- Key considerations in examining workplace factors that may influence access to accommodation
- What HR professionals report employers are currently doing about disability across the employment process
- What HR professionals report employers are doing in accommodation more generally, and in IT/CT areas
- Disability disclosure and workplace accommodations
- Supervisor role in access to accommodations and workplace climate
- Implications for the NASEM Committee’s efforts
Key Considerations in Examining the Workplace

Key Considerations Across the Employment Process

Key Considerations Across the Employment Process

• Starting with top leadership support is imperative
• All parts of the employment process are critical to successful disability inclusion
• Each part of the employment process can be benefited from specific policies and practices
• Including metrics to assess organizational effectiveness and progress is critical

Across the Employment Process, Which Disability Inclusive Policies and Practices are Employers Doing?
Workplace Policies for Disability Inclusion

- Survey of U.S. human resource (HR) professionals
- Over 250,000 SHRM members; stratified sample across industries and org. sizes
- Online/phone based survey focused on:
  - Recruitment and Hiring
  - Accessibility and Accommodation
  - Retention and Advancement
  - Barriers, Metrics and Training
- Data collected fall of 2011
- Response rate: 23% (n=662)

Retention and Advancement
Percentage of organizations which implemented each practice or policy

- Includes progress toward retention or advancement goals for employees with disabilities in the performance review:
  - Percentage: 9

- Has explicit organizational goals related to retention or advancement of employees with disabilities:
  - Percentage: 13

- Has a disability-focused employee network (e.g., employee resource group or affinity group):
  - Percentage: 13

- Offers special career planning and development tools for employees with disabilities:
  - Percentage: 16

- Has a structured mentoring program to support employees with disabilities:
  - Percentage: 17

- Invites employees to confidentially disclose whether they have a disability (e.g., staff surveys):
  - Percentage: 41

- Encourages flexible work arrangements for all employees (e.g., flextime, part-time, telecommuting):
  - Percentage: 57

- Has a return to work or disability management program for employees who are ill/injured or become disabled:
  - Percentage: 76

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% Organizations Tracking Disability Metrics

- Turnover rate for employees with disabilities:
  - Percentage: 11

- Compensation equity:
  - Percentage: 14

- Grievances from employees with disabilities:
  - Percentage: 17

- Employee retention and advancement:
  - Percentage: 18

- Number of job applicants:
  - Percentage: 23

- Number of job applicants hired:
  - Percentage: 29

- Data on accommodations (e.g., types and/or costs):
  - Percentage: 32

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Metrics Tracked by Organizations

- **Compensation equity**: 14 (By Disability) | 41 (By Gender or Ethnicity/Race)
- **Employee retention and advancement**: 18 | 46
- **Number of job applicants**: 23 | 60
- **Number of job applicants hired**: 29 | 65


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How Are Employers Accommodating?
Accessibility and Accommodation

Percentage of organizations which implemented each practice or policy

Has a centralized accommodations fund (i.e., company-wide fund for accommodations).

Regularly reviews the accessibility of its on-line application system to people with visual, hearing, finger dexterity & cognitive impairments.

Evaluates pre-employment occupational screenings to ensure they are unbiased.

Provides advance notice to job applicants that reasonable accommodations are provided during the job application process.

Has a formal (i.e., written, documented) decision-making process for the case-by-case provision of accommodations.

Has an established grievance procedure to address reasonable accommodation issues.

Allows an employee to exceed the maximum duration of medical leave as an accommodation.

Has a designated office or person to address accommodation questions.


Accessible Technology

Issues and Concerns
Who is Affected by Inaccessible Technology?
Inaccessible technology can pose significant barriers to:

- People who are blind
- People with low vision
- People who are deaf or hard of hearing
- People with mobility-related disabilities that limit their use of a mouse
- People with some types of learning or cognitive disabilities


Most Jobs Require Tech use

- Middle-skill jobs are those that require more than an high school education but less than a BA.
- Middle-skill jobs make up 39% of US employment
- Nearly 8 in 10 middle-skill jobs require digital skills
- Digitally intensive middle-skill occupations are growing faster than other middle-skill jobs
- 67% of all middle-skill job openings require at a minimum proficiency in MS Excel or MS Word

Accessible Tech Across the Employment Cycle

HR and IT Survey

- Survey conducted 2003 on prior SHRM survey respondents
- 422 private sector HR reps interviewed
- Most companies were using online job postings (89%), benefits information (82%) and training (63%)
- Majority felt IT in the workplace created barriers for people with hearing, cognitive, visual disabilities
- Very few employers had made accommodations for visual disabilities, almost half had made workstation alterations
- Very few familiar with accommodations for such as screen readers (16% familiar), Braille readers (21%), captioning (25%), speech recognition software (32%)
- Only 13% familiar with guidelines for accessible web design
Access to Workplace Accommodations and the Issue of Disability Disclosure

Cornell and AAPD Study

Results of a survey by the Cornell University ILR School and the American Association of People with Disabilities

- Survey disseminated in 2011 to affiliates of AAPD, SAHMSA, and the Center for Mental Health Services
- Topics included disclosure, leave as a reasonable accommodation, and the use of job applicant screening tools
- 780 completed surveys
Percent Who Experienced Negative Consequences of Disclosure

Not/somewhat apparent | Very apparent
---|---
Immediate consequences | Longer-term consequences
10.6 | 26.9
6.9 | 19.8


“Very Important” Factors When Deciding to Disclose a Disability to an Employer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Persons with a disability (N=598)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Need for accommodation</td>
<td>68.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive supervisor relationship</td>
<td>63.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability friendly workplace</td>
<td>56.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active disability recruiting</td>
<td>50.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing of other successes</td>
<td>49.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability in diversity statement</td>
<td>48.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief in new opportunities</td>
<td>40.7</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### “Very Important” Factors When Deciding NOT to Disclose a Disability to an Employer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Persons with a disability (N=598)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Risk of being fired/not hired</td>
<td>73.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer may focus on disability</td>
<td>62.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk of losing health care</td>
<td>61.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of limited opportunities</td>
<td>61.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor may not be supportive</td>
<td>60.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk being treated differently</td>
<td>57.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk being viewed differently</td>
<td>53.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No impact on job ability</td>
<td>44.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire for privacy</td>
<td>27.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Supervisor Role in Disability Policy and Practice
In work units with inclusive climates, people with disabilities:

1. Feel psychologically safer to be themselves
2. Feel more comfortable asking for needed accommodations
3. More likely to be seen and treated the way they would like
4. Enjoy greater participation in decision-making
5. Experience less disability-related harassment, general mistreatment
6. Have supervisors and coworkers who are more supportive of value of accommodations

Higher levels of engagement & lower turnover

Similarly positive benefits of inclusive climates have been observed for members of all other protected groups


Experiences Are Better for Employees With Disabilities Who Enjoy High Quality Relationships With Their Managers

- Individuals with disabilities who are included in their manager’s “in-group” report:
  - Higher fit between skills and demands of job
  - Higher empowerment
  - Fairer treatment during the accommodation process
  - Higher organizational commitment, satisfaction, and willingness to engage in citizenship behaviors
  - Lower turnover intentions

Managers’ Role is Critical

- Managers are key to the workplace experiences of people with disabilities.
- Manager perceptions of organizational motivation for disability inclusion (true inclusion interests rather than legal compliance) positively impacts disability climate.
- In both private and federal sectors, disability disclosure most often occurs with the manager or co-workers, rather than with HR; education and training around disability disclosure is vital to foster inclusive workplace culture.


Managers’ attributions regarding the motivation underlying the adoption of disability practices
(private sector)

- Employees are more likely to:
  - perceive disability policies/practices as being effective
  - experience the workplace as inclusive
  - disclose their disability
- Employees are less likely to:
  - report experiencing problems as a result of requesting an accommodation
  - report experiencing disability-related bias
Employers Are Accommodating All the Time:

Most Accommodation Requests are Not from Employees with Disabilities

Who is Requesting Accommodations?

- 12.7% of employed PWD have requested accommodations
- 8.6% of employed people WITHOUT disabilities have requested accommodation
- Requests from PWD account for only 5 percent of all accommodation requests
- 11.8 individuals without disabilities requested accommodations compared to 0.6 million with disabilities

More to come from Bill Erickson’s presentation today

Technology Industry Increasingly Interested in Possible Commercial Value of Assistive Technologies

• Google Impact Challenge: $20m in grants to 29 nonprofits using technology to take on accessibility challenges. Grantees creating inexpensive screening tools, new prosthetics, apps for blind and deaf users to increase independence: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2xtmLc_VuzQ&feature=youtu.be

• Microsoft is working with industry leaders to design inclusive products: https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/design/inclusive#inclusive-trailer_video

• IBM’s Accessible Workplace Connection provides a web-based global accommodation management solution to streamline the process of making people more productive in their jobs: https://www-03.ibm.com/able/news/creating_inclusive_workplace.html

• SAP’s Autism@Work Initiative is a partnership that aims to train and hire autistic adults for tech jobs: http://go.sap.com/corporate/en/company/diversity/differently-abled.html

Implications for NASEM Committee on the Use of Selected Assistive Products and Technologies Efforts
Implications

• Continuing barriers in accessing employment – still not a level playing field (equitable preparation for jobs, bias, etc.)
• Employers are accommodating all the time, but are not required to provide personal use assistive devices
• Each accommodation is unique to the functional limitations of the individual person, the specific work environment, and the essential functions of a particular position
• Employers are not necessarily aware of assistive technologies available (and inquiries usually come through the supervisor, who may be even less aware of what's available)
• IWDs are often reluctant to ask for an accommodation which necessitates disability disclosure and perceived risk

Needed Next Steps

• Equitably prepare people with disabilities for the emerging workplace and growth jobs
• Educate more broadly about available technologies and funding to support individual access to them
• Develop messaging for employers around strategic value of disability inclusion, rather than solely compliance
• Creatively partner with business to find solutions in –
  o Developing ways to prepare young people with disabilities for the technology industry and for the growing number of technology-intensive jobs in all industries/sectors,
  o Create workplaces with disability-inclusive climates, and
  o Designing cost-effective universal assistive technologies
Cornell Related Online Resources

- Employer Practices RRTC Project
- U.S. EEOC Disability Charge tabulations online tool
  [http://www.disabilitystatistics.org/eeoc/](http://www.disabilitystatistics.org/eeoc/)
- Employer Practices Disability and Compensation Catalog
  [http://www.disabilitystatistics.org/eprrtc/codebook.cfm](http://www.disabilitystatistics.org/eprrtc/codebook.cfm)
- Cornell Online Repository of Related Publications
  [http://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/edicollect/](http://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/edicollect/)
- Tips for Human Resource (HR) Professionals
  [http://www.hrtips.org/](http://www.hrtips.org/)

References


