

Disability in the workplace



Capable people with disabilities enter the workforce everyday and, due to modern rehabilitation techniques and accessibility accommodations, they are able to do their jobs just like everyone else. Note that people with disabilities want equal treatment, not special treatment.

Interaction with colleagues

The best response towards people living with a disability is a positive, non-discriminatory attitude. Most people with disabilities prefer to be treated like any other colleague.

It's important to note the individual behind the disability, as not everyone will wish to speak about their disability. Take your cue from them – they will ask for help, or speak about it if they wish. If you see that they may need help, offer. They are unlikely to be offended. However, asking them a battery of questions can be considered intrusive, particularly from a stranger when they may wish to just get on with their job.

Legally, people with disabilities are entitled to any adaptive equipment they may need, and management will need to make sure this

is accommodated where necessary such as wheelchair access or a clear unimpeded route around the office and to the restroom for blind colleagues.

Don't be afraid to ask if they are comfortable or if any alterations need to be made. Also taking the initiative where possible can be appreciated, for instance learning sign language in the case of a deaf colleague, can help further relationship building and communication.

In the workplace, whether you have several people with various disabilities or just one, it is best to focus on job descriptions and individuals rather than the disability.

Just remember that all employees and colleagues are on equal ground and that everyone deserves the best opportunity to excel at their job.