

CULTURAL COMPETENCY CORNER

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION FOR THE EMPLOYEES OF
RISE SERVICES, INC.

Dear Rise Employee:

In this edition of the Cultural Competency Corner, we will discuss disability and its implications in the workplace. Additionally, we will share ways that organizations and their members can be more inclusive and encouraging of people with disabilities. We want this insight to add to the collaborative spirit that exists at RISE. We hope you enjoy this edition.



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This newsletter is designed with you in mind. If you have content ideas, cultural events, or cultural celebrations to share, please forward them to Steven Hunter for consideration.

RISE CORPORATE VALUES



Disability Numbers in the Workplace

72% higher staff retention for people with disabilities.



86% of people with a disability have great attendance.



97% of workers with a disability have great safety records.



RECOMMENDED READINGS:

BOOTH, J. (2016). AUTISM EQUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE: REMOVING BARRIERS AND CHALLENGING DISCRIMINATION. JESSICA KINGSLEY PUBLISHERS: PENNSYLVANIA, PA

REFERENCES:

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (2021). [HTTPS://WWW.ADA.GOV/](https://www.ada.gov/)
GOODMAN, A. (2017). THE DO'S AND DON'TS WHEN HIRING PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS. RETRIEVED FROM [HTTPS://WWW.SPECIALNEEDSALLIANCE.ORG/DIVERSABILITY MAGAZINE \(JUNE 2021\).](https://www.specialneedsalliance.org/diversability-magazine-june-2021)
[HTTPS://DIVERSEABILITYMAGAZINE.COM/DISABILITY- PRIDE-](https://diverseabilitymagazine.com/disability-pride-)

DISABILITY IN THE WORKPLACE

The ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) defines a disability as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, having a history of such, or being regarded as such (ADA, 2021). According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2020), 18% of people with disabilities are currently employed. Employees with disabilities represent every demographic of society.

What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the term "disability"? A recent poll by Diversability Magazine (June 2021) found that most respondents reported an image of a person in a wheelchair. This image is so common it is used as the international symbol of access. It is important to remember that disability is more than what can be seen. There are also many invisible or hidden disabilities.

The most common of all types of disability are:

- Mobility and Physical
- Spinal Cord
- Head Injuries-Brain Disorder
- Vision
- Hearing
- Cognitive or Learning
- Psychological

Invisible Disability includes:

- Vision
- Hearing
- Thinking
- Learning
- Movement
- Mental health
- Remembering
- Communicating
- Social relationships

Organizational Support for People with Disabilities

Embracing disabilities in the workplace increases diversity, improves morale, and promotes cultural competency. Employers who hire candidates with special needs or disabilities should approach the process without bias or preconceived notions. Next, we will review some things that should be considered before and after hiring a person with special needs or disabilities.

Before Hiring Make Sure to Review this or a Similiar Inclusion Checklist:

- **Has access and accommodation been considered for employees with disabilities or special needs?**
 - Are buildings and parking areas accessible to people with disabilities?
 - Is your website and application process accessible to applicants with special needs?
 - Is the entrance to the building on an even, hard surface without steps?
 - If the accessible entrance is not immediately apparent, are there directional signs?
 - Are the workstations, supplies, computer, and telephone/communication systems user-friendly for employees of all abilities?
 - Have the policies, practices, and programs been reviewed to ensure inclusion?

When you work with employees who have disabilities or special needs you do not want to create a hostile work environment or toxic culture by:

- Ignoring or dismissing them or their contributions
- Allowing stereotypes, bias, prejudice, or lack of information to influence how you treat the employee
- Forcing "help" or "assistance" on the employee
- Asking inappropriate questions
 - How did you get your disability?
 - Were you born this way?
- Patronizing or being condescending to the employee
- Communicating inappropriately:
 - too loud
 - too slow
 - exaggerated hand motions

Study after study demonstrates employees from this group are hard-working, conscientious, and loyal. Like all members of an organization, they expect to work in an environment where they are treated with dignity and respect. Employees with disabilities and special needs want to be seen and heard. They want to know their contributions are valued.