

Trainer's Guide

Suggested Training Activities

After the group has completed Parts I and II of the case study, one or more of the following questions and follow-up activities could be used to discuss the accommodation and the process involved in greater depth. The Trainer's Guide is designed for trainers and normally would not be given out to participants. These materials usually work best as a total group discussion, ranging from a few minutes up to 10-15 minutes. Questions or activities are typically followed by information to assist in supplementing participant discussion. Trainers are encouraged to add other questions to focus discussion on specific learning objectives and local or state issues.

Compare functional capacities/limitation to essential functions of the job.

- *What other options could be considered for accomplishing essential functions?*
- *Discuss pros and cons of each as well as cost/benefit.*

Repetitive stress injuries can often be minimized if sound ergonomic principles are applied in the design of office workstations. What are some questions to ask during the office workstation evaluation process?

- *Is the **keyboard** placed low enough so that the operator's posture feels comfortable? It is important to maintain a neutral wrist posture and use a light touch on the keyboard. Upper arms should hang loosely by the sides with forearms parallel to the floor. Keyboard height should be between 25 and 31 inches.*
- *What are the **dimensions of the workstation**? The top of the computer monitor should be level with the operator's eyes and positioned at a comfortable viewing distance based on task. Repositioning with an adjustable monitor arm is an option. The monitor should be placed directly in front of the chair and over the center of the workstation knee well. Screen height should be between 33 and 42 inches, the angle of monitor screen should be between 1 and 7 degrees, and viewing distance should be between 18 and 28 inches.*
- *Is the **chair** properly adjusted? A fully adjustable seat and adequate legroom should be provided for the employee. In general, the clearance between the top of the seat pan and the bottom of the work surface should be about 11 inches with about 24 to 32 inches provided horizontally at the knee and ankle respectively. The seat should be large (minimum of 18.2 inches wide) and fully padded. The seat pan height and depth should be adjustable as well as the angle and height of the seat back. A properly designed backrest should support the spine between the L3 and L5 vertebrae. This support generally restores the lordosis (the lower curve) of the spine and allows the chair to assist in supporting the weight of the upper body, which provides relief for the muscles of the back. There should be a stable five-leg base, and the chair should allow the employee to swivel for access to items located to the*

sides of the workstation. If seating adjustments are such that the employee's feet do not touch the ground, an adjustable footrest should be provided.

- *Has glare been diffused with panel diffuser and glare screens? **Task lighting** with a dimmer control should help and adjustable blinds can taper excessive sunlight.*

Have the participants use the criteria listed in the “office workstation evaluation process” to determine how closely their own workstations conform to sound ergonomic principles.

The State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency was not involved in this case. Discuss factors that may influence an employer's (or employee's) decision not to make a referral to vocational rehabilitation.

- *Lack of awareness of services available, or of referral criteria.*
- *Perceived perception of excessive time delays or “red tape.”*
- *Employer has staff dedicated to case management or has already identified other rehabilitation/return to work professionals.*
- *Referrals only made when services are anticipated to be complicated or costly.*
- *Other factors?*

Vendors are often brought in during the assessment phase of a vocational evaluation or job accommodation assessment. What are the pros and cons of their involvement at this stage?

Pros:

- *Maximizing capacity at an early stage increases options. In addition, unnecessary accommodations may be avoided by an initial increase in capacities.*
- *Speeding up the process, especially when timing is a critical factor.*
- *Creating momentum, especially when employee or employer is skeptical.*
- *Vendor often has the most up to date information on product lines.*
- *May be more convenient for the consumer if additional visits are required.*

Cons

- *Vendor may recommend their product without regard for another product that may be more suitable.*
- *Consumer may be “sold” on a product without waiting for other options to be presented.*
- *Vendor may bring more expensive product than is required for the accommodation.*

