



UNIT-3

Encourging Diversity By Hiring

Staff Training Solutions

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:

Unit 3

Encouraging Diversity by Hiring

What Can We Ask?

Human rights legislation puts the onus on the interviewer to be aware of what you can and cannot ask a person. That same legislation protects people from discrimination against someone on the basis of a disability. Really, you just want to know if the person you are interviewing can do the job that you are hiring for and if they can do it well. The fact that they come to work in a wheelchair shouldn't matter.

You cannot ask questions that might bias your decision making and push you to discriminate against someone. You also cannot ask questions that will make the individual feel like they must disclose their diagnosis (although they may choose to do so).

Questions you can ask, without prying for a diagnosis and without making someone feel that you might be discriminating, include:

- I've described the job to you. Do you feel that you would be able to perform the job as described? If not, which duties would you find difficult or not possible?
- The hours for this position are 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday and every second Saturday. Do you have any questions about this expectation?
- Staff who work in this position need to be fit for sedentary work. They mostly work at a computer and phone to cover the reception area. There is no lifting heavier than a package of paper for the photocopier or bringing your laptop to meetings. Staff also move from one area of the floor to another to get files. Do you feel that you are able to perform those duties on a daily basis? If not, can you please explain?
- I'd like you to observe our workplace, and the person currently in that position, for a few hours. Would you be open to that?
- Can you please tell me if you would require any consideration outside of our normal schedules? (What you are getting at here is whether their transportation normally travels on time or will lead this person to be late for work frequently. Also, you give them the option to disclose that they have a regular physiotherapy, occupational therapy, or chiropractic treatment each week, which you can consider accommodating.)
- I see you have a service dog with you. He looks lovely. We do have people who work here and have allergies to dogs which require weekly allergy shots already, so having him here might be a challenge. Do you have the option of leaving the dog at home? How would you feel about that? If you worked from home most of the time but came in for team meetings or birthday cake from time to time, could you leave the dog at home for those brief absences? What would you think of working from home if I came to see you there for some of our meetings, and we brought the rest of the team in over a conference call?
- All of our new staff undergo a baseline medical assessment and functional analysis to ensure they can perform the duties of their job. We are happy to share the results of that assessment

with your physician if you like. Do you have any questions or anticipate problems with that assessment? (Note that ALL new staff undergo the assessment, not just this individual.)

Test Your Knowledge

Other Ideas

What Can the Candidate Expect?

So, you're going off to an interview and you've got this cloud hanging over your head about whether or not to disclose your condition. Maybe you've had this condition much of your life and you are used to talking about yourself. Maybe you aren't so comfortable: perhaps the condition is new and you've had little to no chance to talk about it.

What Do You Do?

You are not required by law to disclose your diagnosis. That is confidential information. The question is: do you discuss your ability levels and any accompanying restrictions at the interview? If your condition is obvious, you can be sure that you need to discuss it in the interview. The difficulty is in deciding how much to disclose. What's important for the employer is to know that you can do the job well, just as well as anybody else, so that their business remains viable.

If you are outgoing and comfortable with this style, you might offer something like this: "I need my wheelchair (or crutches, or whatever), and aside from needing a place to park it, I don't need any accommodation to do this job."

Or, perhaps a minor accommodation is needed: "I am hard of hearing in both ears, so I do need a special headset for the phone, but otherwise I don't need any accommodation to do this job."

Or, perhaps a more sizeable accommodation is needed. "My condition is well managed, and that's why I am able to manage a full time job. I would appreciate some flexibility with hours because I do have a 40-minute physiotherapy appointment three times a week, but I can book the first appointment in the morning and still work full time and do all the work related to this position."

Do You Wait to Disclose after You've Been in the Job a While?

This is a tricky decision to be faced with. You don't want to miss out on the job, but we also know that despite their public face, some employers still have a hard time creating a diverse workplace. If they know you have some kind of medical need, they cannot help but think of the impact your condition could have on existing work teams, their benefit plan costs, or even the viability of their workplace.

In a labor shortage situation, where employers are having a hard time finding enough workers, they will deal with the impact your condition will have. If there are lots of potential candidates, however, the reality of it is that the employer is likely to choose someone else, unless you come with a very strong and unique skill set.

Depending on your condition and whether it will improve or become worse over time, you'll have to decide whether to disclose or not. It is up to you. Sometimes, the choice not to disclose means that you can get into the workplace, work hard, and establish your value to demonstrate that hiring you was a good decision.

Employers with long time employees will see some of them develop conditions at work and they will accommodate those individuals without a second thought. We have to keep working with those same employers to help them realize that hiring someone with an existing condition is no larger an issue to their business.

Using the STOP Technique

The Four Steps

Diversity expert Lenora Billings-Harris has developed a four-step technique that you can use when someone is behaving in an inappropriate manner. It's called STOP. Although it can be applied to almost any situation, she has designed it for dealing with diversity issues. You may find it a very useful tool to increase the level of diversity and disability awareness in your workplace.

S: State the inappropriate behavior objectively.

Tell the offender what needs to be changed in a specific, objective way. If you show your feelings, the offender will often respond with anger and denial, which will get both of you nowhere.

Example: "Bob, when you call my ideas retarded..."

T: Tell the offender how you feel when s/he performs this behavior.

This is where you can add your feelings or opinions, although feelings are usually best so that this doesn't become a debate. Make sure you stay as logical and unemotional as possible.

Example: "... it really hurts my feelings and makes me feel devalued."

O: Give the offender options.

In addition to telling the person what you don't want them to do, offer several suggestions for what they can do.

Example: “I would prefer that you use a different word, like silly or illogical. It would be even better if you could simply ask me to explain my idea further.”

P: Positive results.

Let the offender know what the results will be if they change their behavior. Dale Carnegie states that in order to change behavior, the person must know WIIFM (what’s in it for me?).

Example: “I really feel that this could improve our working relationship and our communication skills. I think our ads would be a lot more creative, too.”

Here are some tips for making STOP work for you.

- The first few times you use STOP, test it on a child when they act inappropriately.
- Plan out what you’ll say. This will help you identify your feelings, options, and possible results.
- When you talk to the offender, make sure you’re in private.
- Don’t expect miracles. If the person does not change their behavior, you can try the process again until it does work.
- If the behavior does not change and it interferes with work, bring it to your supervisor’s attention.
- If the behavior does change, show appreciation as soon as you can.

Practice

Role Play

Scenario One

Cindy and Bob are in a one-on-one meeting to discuss Bob’s performance review. (Cindy is his direct manager.) Cindy is reviewing some new reports that Bob has had difficulty preparing on time and correctly. Bob replies, “Geez, you’re right uptight, are you on your period? Quit bitching at me!”

Scenario Two

Tom is the company’s administrative assistant. He is blind. He has noticed that his manager, Samantha, has a unique way of introducing herself: she comes up behind him and squeezes his shoulders. He often finds this startling and uncomfortable.

Scenario Three

Mark is one of the company’s senior accountants. He is preparing a major report for the company’s CFO. When he asks Tom, his manager, to review his figures, Tom says, “It’ll be alright; you’re an Asian so you must be good at math.”

Scenario Four

Jamie, Alice, Sarah, and Susan are all sales representatives managed by Steven. Jamie is gay and Steven knows this, although he is not very understanding and accepting. At a business gathering, Steven introduces himself, and then says, “And these are my gals” to introduce his salespeople.

Scenario Five

As a Catholic, Mary does not eat meat on Fridays. Her co-workers are aware of this belief. One Friday, she attends a company lunch and is dismayed to find that the menu items are meatballs and beef lasagna. One of her co-workers says, “Geez, I’m sure God will forgive you for eating meat on a Friday.”

Scenario Six

You have just started a new job in a multi-story office building. You are in a wheelchair, and you’ve found the entrance ramp a little tricky, but you’ve figured it out. However, one of your co-workers often comes up behind you and starts to push your chair without saying anything.

