



Email Staff Address – Inclusive Employment

The purpose of the 'staff address' is to share with you a bit about inclusive employment, including a bit about my role in working in partnership with you and your workplace. This is also an opportunity for you to get to know a bit more about your newest teammate, _____. Here, I will share a bit about _____ – his interests, talents but also areas where he may need your help. Afterall, we *all* need help from one another, and this is a way to understand how to be a supportive colleague.

1. Why Inclusive Employment?

- Currently, there is an ~80% unemployment rate for individuals with developmental disabilities.
- Individuals with developmental disabilities have the same dreams and goals as anyone, and work is one of the ways that we reach our goals. Work is so much more than a pay cheque; it is a valued role that helps shape our identity, is a place where we make friends (sometimes even meet life partners!) It's where we learn to work as a team and contribute to our communities. Work is where we find belonging and meaning. Our society values those who work more than those who don't.
- You may be wondering, "what is a developmental disability?" (aka intellectual disability.) People with intellectual disabilities may have some difficulty learning things, may need extra assistance with practice, may not be as fast as others and the learning curve may be longer. Having said that, people with disabilities can be better at some tasks than people without disabilities!

2. A bit about the new employee

- _____ is the new [role.] He will be responsible [explain the role individual has been hired for.]
- [A bit about the individual: hobbies, skills, interests.]
- We all have strategies that help us learn best. For _____, it's most helpful when[include any support strategies, what type of learner the individual is (i.e. visual,) and any other key ways to help set the individual up for success.]
- All of our jobs can make us stressed at times. In these moments, encourage _____....

3. Supports for the Team

- In addition to helping _____ find employment, my support is also to help sustain it. During _____ shifts, you will see myself learning the role alongside _____. My role is not to train, supervise or do the job for _____. Instead, my role is to provide that little bit of extra support _____ and his team might need. Our goal is to help the team provide support to _____, just as you would to any other colleague. I will work to 'phase' out over time. Meaning, when _____ is capable of doing a task on his own or with his colleagues, I want to honor that and, as a result, you will see less and less of me. If/when I phase my on job supports out, it doesn't mean I can't come back. If _____ is learning a new task down the road and needs a little bit of extra support, or if there is ever a bump in the road, I would come right back to help.
- You may be wondering what your role is? Your job is to treat _____ as you would any other co-worker; providing mentorship, helping him learn the ropes and making him feel part of the team. He is bit shy at first, so really giving him that welcomed feeling will help him be himself.
- This may seem obvious and silly to point out, but it is imperative that you treat _____ like you would anyone else. I state that because, unfortunately, individuals with developmental disabilities are often treated like children, or spoken to in an almost condescending way. Language is incredible powerful. Even in the way you say, "Hi" to _____, make sure you do it like you would anyone else.

Thank you to the _____ team and your commitment to inclusive hiring! Please contact me if you have any questions.