

# Plan for Approaching Employers

(Disclosure of a Disability at the Workplace)

Job Seeker: \_\_\_\_\_

Employment Specialist: \_\_\_\_\_

Employment Contractor: \_\_\_\_\_

DRS Counselor: \_\_\_\_\_ DRS PID: \_\_\_\_\_

Some people ask their employment specialist to talk to employers on their behalf. For instance, if a person was interested in factory jobs, the employment specialist might meet managers of factories to learn more about those jobs and to advocate for the job seeker. When employment specialists talk to employers, they usually say that they help job seekers who have disabilities or that they help jobseekers who have had mental health issues. The reasons that a person might want the employment specialist to talk to employers could include:

- ❖ Extra help with a job search. Employment specialists can describe the job seeker's strengths as a worker, learn about available jobs, and request interviews.
- ❖ Extra feedback about work performance. Employment specialists can keep in touch with employers after a person is hired to ask for feedback about how the person is performing the job, and to help if there is a problem. Some people benefit from a change in work hours, work duties, or help learning a job.
- ❖ Others people do not give employment specialists permission to talk to employers on their behalf. Instead the employment specialist helps with finding job leads, filling out applications, practicing interviewing skills, and other job seeking activities. The reasons that some people would not want to disclose that they use supported employment services might include:
  - ❖ Concern that employers will not hire a person with a disability. It is true that there is stigma about mental health problems and some employers probably do discriminate. But it is also true that many employers are interested in working with programs like IPS supported employment.
  - ❖ Some people do not mind if their supervisor knows they are working with an employment program, but they would not want their co-workers to find out. Your employment specialist cannot guarantee that co-workers will not find out that you receive help from a supported employment program.
  - ❖ Some people do not feel that this type of help is necessary.
  - ❖ Either option is fine. You should pick the strategy that feels most comfortable to you. It is also okay to change your mind during the job search, or after you are hired.

Thanks to The IPS Employment Center at The Rockville Institute February 2017



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## For now, what is your preference about approaching employers?

- It is fine with me if my employment specialist talks to employers on my behalf.
- I am not sure right now and I would like some more time to think about this and receive some more information.
- I do not want my employment specialist to talk to employers.
- I do not want my employment specialist to share information about me with employers.
  - However, if my employment specialist is talking to an employer who has the type of jobs that I like and s/he hears about a good job lead, I would like to hear about that.
  - Maybe I will decide to disclose to that employer.

Other Comments:

Job Seeker: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved Date \_\_\_\_\_

Employment Specialist: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Date \_\_\_\_\_

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