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Disability Definitions and Acronyms

Section Purpose

To help guide One-Stop staff in understanding the various terms, jargon, and abbreviations often used in discussions and materials related to services for customers with disabilities.

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- A) **Disability and Employment Related Acronyms:** An explanation of various acronyms used in disability and employment services
- B) **Glossary of Disability and Employment Terms:** Definitions of various terms used in disability and employment services

Disability and Employment Related Acronyms

ACT - Assertive Community Treatment

ACT programs offer comprehensive community adjustment services for people with mental illness through a coordinated team approach

ADA - Americans with Disabilities Act

The ADA protects people with disabilities from discrimination in employment, government services, and public accommodations.

ADD - Attention Deficit Disorder

A disorder that is characterized by symptoms of inattention and hyperactivity/impulsivity.

ADL - Activities of Daily Living

Basic living skills including personal care and hygiene, cooking and money management.

CRP - Community Rehabilitation Provider

A community-based, typically private non-profit agency that provides employment services to adults with disabilities.

DBTACs - Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers

Federally-funded centers that provide information and technical assistance to businesses, people with disabilities, and other entities concerning the ADA.

DD - Developmental Disability

A disability whose onset occurs before age 22 and whose effects are expected to be lifelong, such as cerebral palsy, mental retardation, and epilepsy.

FLSA - Fair Labor Standards Act

The FLSA sets minimum wage, overtime pay, equal pay, record keeping, and child labor standards for American workplaces.

IDEA - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

The federal law that mandates a “free appropriate public education” to all “eligible” children with disabilities (including mental, physical, and emotional disabilities) who, because of their disability, require special instruction in order to learn.

IEP - Individualized Education Program (school)

A plan, mandated by IDEA, that states the goals and services for a student for a period of up to, but for no longer than, one year (it is rewritten each year to reflect changes in the educational program).

ILC - Independent Living Centers

ILCs are community based, not-for-profit, non-residential organizations that provide advocacy, peer counseling, independent living skills training, and information & referral to persons of any age with any type of disability.

IRWE - Impairment-Related Work Expense

A Social Security Work Incentive that can be used to help reduce the impact of earnings on Social Security disability benefits (SSI and SSDI). IRWEs include the reasonable cost of items and services (i.e., attendant care, medical or prosthetic devices, drugs and medical services, residential modifications and special transportation) that, because of an impairment, a person needs and uses in order to work. The cost of these items and services is deducted from the earnings that Social Security uses to figure out Substantial Gainful Activity.

ISP - Individual Support Plan (adult service provider)

A formal plan that assesses an individual's needs for supports; identifies and chooses the natural, generic, and specialized supports that will meet those needs; and plans for the outcome that will enhance the individual's quality of life.

ITP - Individual Transition Plan

A planning document, required for students with disabilities starting at age 14 and revised on an annual basis, that outlines their transition from school to adult life.

MH - Mental Health

Typically refers to people with mental illness and psychiatric disabilities

MR - Mental Retardation

A developmental disability characterized by slower learning and more concrete thought processes

NIDRR - National Institute on Disability Rehabilitation and Research

A federal funding agency that provides leadership and support for a comprehensive program of research related to the rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities. NIDRR is a division of OSERS.

O & M - Orientation and Mobility

The training process that prepares individuals who are blind or visually impaired to travel safely and independently.

OSEP - Office of Special Education Programs

The federal agency that oversees special education services for children and youth with disabilities from birth through age 21. OSEP is a division of OSERS.

OSERS - United States Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services

A federal agency that supports programs that assist in educating children with special needs; provides for the rehabilitation of youth and adults with disabilities; and supports research to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities. OSERS consists of three program-related components: OSEP, RSA, and NIDRR.

PASS - Plans for Achieving Self Support

A Social Security Work Incentive that can be used to help reduce the impact of earned income on SSI benefits. A PASS allows a person with a disability to set aside income and/or resources towards a work goal for a specified period of time (i.e., a person could set aside money for education, vocational training, or business start-up expenses).

P & A - Protection & Advocacy

Federally-funded organizations, located in every state, that protect the legal rights of people with disabilities

PCA - Personal Care Assistant

PCAs assist people with disabilities to be as independent as possible by providing support and assistance with ADLs and organizing social, cultural, and other activities upon request.

RRTC - Rehabilitation Research and Training Center

Federally-funded entities whose primary activities are to conduct research targeted toward the production of new knowledge which will improve rehabilitation methodology and service delivery, alleviate or stabilize disabling conditions, and promote maximum social and economic independence.

RSA - Rehabilitation Services Administration

A federal agency that oversees programs that help individuals with physical or mental disabilities to obtain employment through the provision of such supports as counseling, medical and psychological services, and job training. RSA is the main funding agency for state Vocational Rehabilitation programs. RSA is a division of OSERS.

SE - Supported Employment

The provision of ongoing supports from an external source (e.g., a community rehabilitation provider or state agency) to an individual in a paid, community-based setting, where the majority of the workers do not have disabilities, directed at teaching the tasks of that specific job as they occur, and identifying supports for the individual within the workplace.

SGA - Substantial Gainful Activity

A level of earnings used by the Social Security Administration to indicate the performance of significant and productive physical or mental work for pay or profit. For 2001, SGA is \$740 (\$1240 for individuals who are blind). SGA is adjusted on an annual basis for inflation.

Sped, SpEd - Special Education

Education services for children and youth with disabilities.

SSA - Social Security Administration

SSA provides monthly cash benefits to approximately 10 million individuals in the United States with disabilities.

SSDI - Supplemental Security Disability Insurance

A monthly insurance benefit paid to people who either: a) have previous work experience themselves, and have paid Social Security taxes (FICA) for enough years to be covered under Social Security; or b) have a retired or deceased parent who has paid into the system. Individuals on SSDI typically are also eligible for Medicare.

SSI - Supplemental Security Income

A monthly cash benefit that is available from the Social Security Administration to people who have a disability, low income, and few resources; people who receive SSI also automatically become eligible to receive Medicaid medical insurance in most states.

TANF - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

The replacement for AFDC under welfare reform. What is typically referred to when “welfare benefits” are discussed.

TDD or TTY - Telecommunication Device for the Deaf, Teletypewriter

Electronic device that allows people who are deaf to communicate over telephone systems.

TWWIIA - Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act

A piece of legislation which began to go into affect in the year 2000. TWWIIA is designed to create greater incentives for people with disabilities on social security disability benefits to return to work.

UAP - University Affiliated Program

A federally-funded program whose mission is to serve as a liaison between academic expertise and institutions of higher learning and service delivery systems so as to positively affect the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families by increasing their independence, productivity, and integration into communities. Each state has at least one UAP.

VR - Vocational Rehabilitation

The process of assisting individuals with disabilities to obtain and maintain employment through diverse services tailored to meet the needs of each individual. Each state has a public VR agency.

WOTC - Work Opportunity Tax Credit

A federal income tax credit that encourages employers to hire eight targeted groups of job seekers, including people with disabilities and people who receive TANF benefits.

WIA - Workforce Investment Act

Workforce legislation passed by the U.S. Congress in 1998 that must be implemented by all states by July 1, 2000. WIA replaces the Job Training Partnership Act (WIA) and is the legislation which, among other things, establishes the One-Stop system.

USDOL - United States Department of Labor

The national agency which oversees federal employment and training programs, including the implementation of the Workforce Investment Act.

Glossary of Disability & Employment Terms

Assertive Community Treatment (ACT)

ACT programs offer comprehensive community adjustment services for people with mental illness through a coordinated team approach

Assistive Technology

Technology that assists individuals to participate in activities as independently as possible. This can include “low-tech” items (i.e., timers, organizational tools, calculators) as well as more advanced technology (i.e., wheelchairs, computers, talkers).

Clubhouse Program

A psycho-social rehabilitation program for individuals who have psychiatric disabilities, with an emphasis on participant control, working in conjunction with paid staff. Clubhouses often provide assistance with employment.

Community Rehabilitation Provider (CRP)

A community-based agency, typically private and non-profit, that provides employment services to adults with disabilities. The majority of funding for most CRPs comes from government agencies and funding sources.

Consumer/Client

Terms typically used when referring to individuals who receive services from human service providers and agencies.

Employment Specialist

A staff member from a community agency who helps people with disabilities obtain employment. This term is sometimes used interchangeably with the term “job coach”.

Enclaves

A group of individuals with disabilities who work in a community business with ongoing support and possibly supervision provided by rehabilitation agency staff.

Fairweather Lodges

Residential/vocational settings where groups of individuals with psychiatric disabilities live together and jointly operate small business ventures.

Functional Vocational Assessment

Identifies an individual’s vocational interests and skills through the performance of job tasks in a variety of actual work environments in the community. Also known as a situational assessment.

Individualized Education Plan

A plan, mandated by law, that states the goals and services for a student for a period of up to but for no longer than one year (it is rewritten each year to reflect changes in the educational program). The school system is required to provide all services that are written into the IEP.

Natural Supports

Natural, supportive relationships that are fostered and developed among individuals with disabilities and non-disabled co-workers, classmates, activity participants, neighbors, etc. An emphasis in recent years in the disability field has been on using these relationships to support an individual with a disability, rather than relying on paid staff for assistance and support.

Person-Centered Planning

A planning process that focuses on the individual and his/her interests, strengths, and needs. Emphasis is placed on the planning process being controlled by the individual with a disability, with involvement by individuals of their choice from their personal network. There are numerous models of this type of planning available.

Provider Agency or Vendor

A private agency that offers residential, vocational, and/or support services that are purchased by state human service agencies.

Reasonable Accommodation

Change in an environment to meet the access needs of an individual in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Situational Assessment

See *functional vocational assessment*.

Supported Employment

The provision of ongoing support from an external source (e.g., a community rehabilitation provider or state agency) to an individual in a paid, community-based employment setting, where the majority of the workers do not have disabilities. Supported employment typically uses a job coach (also known as an employment specialist or consultant) to provide assistance on the job.

Transition

In the special education and rehabilitation fields, the process of a student's movement from school-based, school-sponsored activities and services to community-based and/or adult services.