

Additional Strategies for Natural Supports and Inclusion

The *Workplace Culture Survey*, and *Job Coach/Natural Supports Record Form* are primary sources of information on strategies for natural supports and social inclusion. The following are additional strategies to also consider:

Interdependency of job design

- Do coworkers rely on the work of the employee with a disability to get their own work done?
- Does the supported employee job require him/her to communicate with coworkers throughout the workday?
- How many other employees work in the supported employee's immediate work area?

Employees with disabilities who have more typical job situations are more likely to be socially integrated at work.

- Does the employee follow the same chain of command as other workers?
- Are the employee's job responsibilities equal in importance to those of other workers?
- Is the employee's compensation package similar to that of other company employees?

Degree of equality, tolerance, and acceptance present in the work environment

Supervisor's stance with regard to the employee with a disability is critical to understanding the employee's level of social participation and feelings of social support as well as coworker attitudes toward the employee. Supervisors set the tone for the social inclusion, or exclusion, of an employee with a disability at the job site.

- Does the direct supervisor take the same responsibility for supervising an employee with a disability that he/she takes for supervising other workers?
- Does the supervisor interact with this employee in the same way as with other employees?

Workplace culture (social and behavioral norms of a workplace)

- What is the typical climate or atmosphere of the workplace?
- Are employees positive and friendly?
- Do they interact and talk socially during work time?

Additional Social Inclusion Tips:

- Encourage employee to greet and say goodbye to co-workers as part of the work routine
- Assist the employee to share with co-workers/supervisors (i.e., holiday cards, birthday gifts, donuts, etc.), and avoid lack of reciprocity.
- Proactively plan for employee to attend any social activity and facilitate support for SE to attend.
- Assist the employee to initiate interactions, having lunch, or after work activities. Help to facilitate interactions and to help everyone feel at ease.
- Assess who has good social skills and a good social network at the job site. Help the employee to fit in with that worker/group.

