USING SELF-AWARENESS TO ADVOCATE FOR SUPPORT NEEDS IN DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENTS

By:

Jordan Smelley, MHPS

SELF-AWARENESS DEFINITION

- **Ability to recognize your strengths, challenges, and personality traits and understanding how they shape you as an individual.**

SUPPORT NEEDS DEFINITION

- types of assistance or devices needed in order to participate as independently as possible in the community at large including but not limited to being able to fulfill job duties with as much independence as possible, fulfill educational requirements for degrees or trainings, and ability to participate in social interactions without feeling isolated.

WHAT ARE STRENGTHS

Characteristics and/or skills that you have that you have mastered or have a strong foundation in.

Ex 1. One thing that sets Jim apart from other applicants is his organizational skills. In this scenario Jim's ability to be very organized is a strength of his that sets him apart from others

Ex 2. Jane's ability to empathize with her clients make her a very effective therapist. Here Jane's characteristic of empathy is a strength for her because her level of empathy allows her to be a more effective therapist.

WHAT ARE CHALLENGES

Characteristics and/or skills you struggle with executing.

Ex. 1 Although Jim has excellent organizational skills he struggles with making friends. In this scenario while one of Jim's strengths is organizational skills he struggles with making friends which would mean that making friends would be considered one of Jim's challenges.

Ex. 2 Although Jane is excellent at expressing empathy towards her clients, Jane struggles with expressing disappointment with some clients.
In this scenario while expressing empathy is a strength for Jane, expressing disappointment with some clients is something Jane struggles with executing therefore her struggle with expressing disappointment with some clients would be considered a challenge for Jane.

WHAT ARE PERSONALITY TRAITS

- characteristics that distinguishes the character, action and attitude of a person

- Ex: Smiling, cheerful, angry, bitter, Honesty, Responsibility, etc....

STEPS TO USING SELF-AWARENESS TO IDENTIFY SUPPORT NEEDS IN DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENTS

- **Step 1: Identify the type of environment you will be in**

- **Step 2: Identify your strengths and challenges for the environment you identified in step 1.**

- **Step 3: Use a piece of paper or your electronic device(phone, computer, tablet) to write down support needs you have for the challenges you identified in step 2**

- **Step 4: Take or if it's on an electronic device print off to take with you the support needs you identified in step 3 and advocate for those support needs. Keep in mind for support needs on the job or in academic environments you may be required to submit documentation from one of your doctors.**

EXAMPLE OF ADVOCATING FOR SUPPORT NEED IN WORK ENVIRONMENT

- John was hired as a cashier at Taco Bell. While John can do most job duties without any support, he is unable to stand for long periods of time due to a medical condition. John being self-aware of his challenge of standing for extended periods of time meets with his supervisor in private and explains to his supervisor he has a support need of having a stool to sit on while working at the cash registers so that he can perform his duties of working at the cash register. When John advocates for his support need, he provides his supervisor a doctor's note stating that John does have a medical condition that prevents him for standing for long periods of time and having a stool to sit on would be an appropriate support need for John. Because John was self-aware about his struggles standing for extended periods of time, he was able to get what he needed in order to fulfill his duties as a cashier.

EXAMPLE OF ADVOCATING FOR SUPPORT NEED IN COLLEGE ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT

- •Jim has decided to attend community college to get an Associate of Applied Science degree and through research has identified he must go through Disability Support Services at the campus in order to get his support needs due to learning differences met for classes he enrolls in. Jim being self-aware that his two biggest struggles are timed exams and exams where it is more hands-on schedules an appointment with the Disability Support Services office on campus.

- When Jim goes to his appointment, he brings along medical documentation from his doctors explaining Jim's learning differences and asks Disability Support Services for extended time on all non hands on exams and to have more hands-on exams individually proctored with extended time as well so that Jim can talk out loud during exams that are more hands on and have Jim identifying things through models, microscope, and/or pined areas on cadavers. Because Jim did his research and went through proper channels at the community college Jim was able to get his support needs of extended time on non hands on exams and having more hands-on exams individually proctored with extended time as well.

EXAMPLE OF ADVOCATING FOR SUPPORT NEED IN SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

- Tina who lost her left leg in a car accident and now wears an artificial left leg, so she can get around without crutches loves bowling. The place Tina bowls at decides to offer a summer bowling league. Tina signs up for a house team because Tina doesn't have any friends that share her interest in bowling. The day of the first games for the bowling league Tina meets with her team and explains that sometimes she can't bowl a full game because she develops sores on her left thigh because she wears an artificial left leg so she can get around without crutches and was hoping the team would support her by bowling for her if needed so Tina doesn't develop an infection in her thigh and her teammates agree. Because Tina was self-aware about how she can develop sores and went ahead and disclosed this to her team and asked her team for support Tina was able to get the support she needed and prevented getting an infection in her left thigh.

QUESTIONS??

Email: jordansmelleyprss@gmail.com

Cell: 817-454-6184