

EmploymentWorks Canada

Program Overview

A Training Program for Young Adults with ASD Who Want to Work

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EmploymentWorks Canada (EWC) is a federally funded, evidence-informed 12-week program that offers employment preparedness training, as well as substantial experiential community-based job sampling and work experience for individuals who have been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). It specifically serves young adults that range in age from 15 to 29 years, who are no longer attending school, and focuses on the development and application of skills required in the workplace. The 60 hour program consists of 24 sessions, delivered twice per week over 12 weeks, for 2.5 hours session. The first weekly module comprises structured, yet tailored content aimed at employment and social skill building, while the second module focuses on review of the learned concepts from the previous session, follow-up on homework, and the application of learning through experiential activities in a real work environment.



EWC brings together important ideas, exercises and activities from a wide range of excellent sources, including existing programs. It is flexible with its approach to program delivery, and tailors the components to ‘fit’ the individual and the workplace. The key program objectives are to leverage the ‘power’ of peer mentorship to support goals and employment skill development; enable the acquisition and/or advancement of employment-related skills; increase community engagement by promoting benefits for the workplace; identify ways to foster success, and expand workplace hiring and accommodation practices; empower individuals to create and execute strategies for reaching achievable employment goals; as well as enhance individual enjoyment, build confidence, and enrich community.

The program is distinguished by the following characteristics:

- *Integrated within the workplace*
- *Focus on adult learning approaches*
- *Orientation to core skill advancement and individual employment ‘fit’*
- *Partnership (learners/peers/community-workplace partners/potential employers)*
- *Peer mentorship and support*
- *Integration of video modelling*
- *Skill building with opportunities for repetition and practice*
- *Wide range approach to job sampling and skill exposure*

These components ultimately support capacity building, the nurturing of increasingly ‘welcoming’ workplace communities, and the celebration of strength. The three major themes that have been derived from the EWC program include: “*Knowing Myself as a Working Person*”, “*Engaging in the Culture of Employment*”, and “*Building My Skills for Employment*”. Support for community/workplace partners, peers, and families, is embedded in program implementation, and each local program is further invited to tailor its delivery based on relevant community and population considerations.