Assistive Technology for a Successful Transition

South Carolina
Assistive Technology Program
CENTER FOR DISABILITY RESOURCES
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Carol Page, PhD, CCC-SLP, ATP, CBIS
Program Manager
SC Assistive Technology Program
carol.page@uscmed.sc.edu
803-935-5301

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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vRi4zCiclRY

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Myths Regarding AT

- **Assistive Technology is a luxury.**
- **Assistive Technology is expensive and complicated to use.**
- **The Assistive Technology professional knows best.**
- **Assistive Technology is hard to find or make.**
- **Assistive Technology is for old people.**

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Realities

- **Assistive Technology allows individuals with disabilities to perform critical functions in the workplace. (i.e. using a computer to complete data entry forms.)**
- **The average reasonable accommodation for assistive technology cost less than $500 per individual.**
- **58% of job accommodations cost nothing.**
- **The cost of assistive technology can be shared between the individual and the employer.**

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Realities

- **Tax credits and deductions may also be available to employers for providing assistive technology as a reasonable accommodation in the workplace.**
- **Individuals with disabilities are the experts on the equipment they need to perform effectively at work; it is their responsibility to negotiate with the employer the accommodation best suited for them.**

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What Is Assistive Technology?

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Assistive Technology

- Considered "The Great Equalizer."
- Gives people with disabilities the opportunity to learn, communicate, participate, and achieve independence.
- Allows people with disabilities to perform competitively at work, college, and the community.

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What Is Assistive Technology?

AT includes any item, piece of equipment, or product that is used to <u>increase</u>, <u>maintain</u>, <u>or improve</u> the <u>functional capabilities</u> of individuals with disabilities.

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Assistive Technology Devices

- **Low Tech Devices**: Inexpensive, easily made, easy to learn, readily available, easy to replace and maintain.

Large timer

Day Timer

Alphabet board

Reacher

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Assistive Technology Devices

- **Mid**: May cost more, require some training, have special design, often need power source.

Hearing amplification

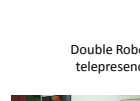Communication device

Amazon Echo

Large button phone

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Assistive Technology Devices

- **High:** Higher cost, need specific training to learn, often customized.

Double Robot telepresence

Speech to text software

Refreshable braille display

Eye-gaze computer access

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Where Are Assistive Technology Devices?

- Low, mid, and high tech devices can be found:
  - At common local stores (Home Depot, Staples, Best Buy, WalMart, Target, Office Depot)
  - At specialized vendors (Maxi-Aids, Infogrip, Independent Living Solutions)
  - In generic catalogs
  - On the Internet

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Assistive Technology Services

- Demonstration of devices based on need.

- Selection of the appropriate device.

- Coordination with service providers (e.g., therapists, engineers).

- Training / technical assistance for the person and supporting individuals (e.g., personal assistants).

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Job Accommodations

Reasonable Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities

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Figure 1. Number and types of employment supports and workplace accommodations used on and off the job.
Note. Employment supports and accommodations total more than 15 because respondents reported more than one accommodation. Although hand controls and other vehicle modifications constitute assistive technology, we classified them separately here. Other supports and accommodations include changes in training materials, reimbursement for taxi fares, and wellness items.

Number and Types of Employment Supports and Workplace Accommodations Used On and Off the Job
Denny-Brown, O'Day &McLeod (2015) Staying Employed: Services and Supports for Workers With Disabilities. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*, 26(2), 124-131.

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Reasonable Accommodations

Enable a person with a disability to:
- Participate equally in the job application process
- Perform "essential functions" of the job.
  - Fundamental job duties
  - Job descriptions
- Enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment.

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Reasonable Accommodations

- Reasonable accommodations need not be the "best" or "ideal," but need only be "effective."
- The employer does not have to provide an accommodation that would be primarily for personal use.
- Accommodations should assist in performing job functions.
- Undue Hardship
  - A particular accommodation may not be required if it would cause "significant difficulty or expense" to the employer
  - Another effective accommodation should be sought and implemented

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Reasonable Accommodations

1. Develop a partnership with your employer.
2. Focus on your abilities and request accommodations that allow you to perform effectively.
3. Make a request in writing and meet with your employer to discuss the reasonable accommodations.
4. Negotiate and be willing to discuss options for assistive technology and reasonable accommodations.
5. Have a follow-up meeting with your employer and discussed the effectiveness of the accommodations and any changes that need to be made.

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Examples of AT Accommodations

- Can be low cost to high cost

  Use of color to mark files/bins/controls

  Simplified instructions using diagrams/photos

  Automatic bathroom soap dispensers and hand dryers
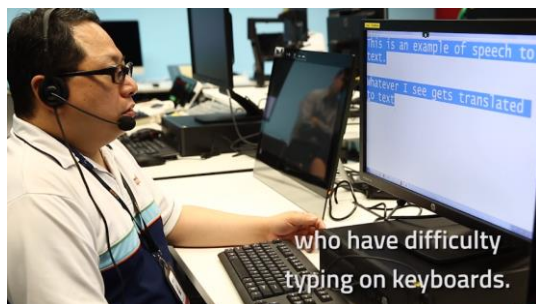
  Ramps and automatic doors

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Examples of AT Accommodations

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Examples of AT Accommodations

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The Cost of AT Accommodations

- The potential employer is responsible for funding any assistive technology accommodations for the application process or the job.
- However, there are funding sources to help!
  – Federal and state tax credits and deductions
  – Assistive Technology Lending Library (Try before you buy!)

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Effective Practices

2013 Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) determined these to be the top effective practice needs:
- Address reasonable accommodation requests expeditiously,
- Have a centralized administration of and funding for addressing reasonable accommodation requests, and
- Ensure that websites where jobs are listed are fully accessible and provide a clear process for requesting a reasonable accommodation.

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Resources for Assistive Technology in the Workplace

Who can I contact for help?

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Business Leadership Network

- The Business Leadership Network (BLN) is an employer driven program designed for business leaders to promote hiring practices that enable qualified people with disabilities to enter and succeed in the workplace.
- The emphasis of the BLN is to create opportunities where employers can communicate, peer-to-peer, to provide candid and frank assessments of hiring successes and challenges.

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Funding for AT in the Work Place

- The Employer Assistance and Resource Network (EARN) is a resource for employers seeking to recruit, hire, and retain qualified employees with disabilities http://www.askearn.org/

- EARN: Employer Guide to Tax Incentives for Helping Employers Hire and Retain People with Disabilities http://ilr-edi-r1.ilr.cornell.edu/askearn/r-tax-incen.cfm

- Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) http://www.cwt.va.gov/ is a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) program that supports work-ready veterans in competitive jobs and consults with business and industry regarding their specific employment needs.

- Disability.gov http://www.disability.gov is a federal website containing disability-related resources, the Employing People with Disabilities section includes resources for employers on recruiting, hiring and retaining people with disabilities. Information is available on assistive technology and accommodations, tax incentives, occupational safety and success stories.

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Funding for AT in the Work Place

- Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) http://www.dol.gov/odep/ The Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) provides national leadership on disability employment policy by developing and influencing the use of evidence-based disability policies and practices, building collaborative partnerships, and delivering authoritative and credible employment data. ODEP provides funding for services such as AskEARN and the Job Accommodation Network (JAN). The ODEP website has information for employers on the latest news on disability employment policy, events, resources, toolkits, and contact information for technical assistance support centers such as EARN.

- Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) program for employers. Relevant categories include disabled veterans and vocational rehabilitation referrals. http://www.doleta.gov/business/incentives/opptax/PDF/WOTC_Fact_Sheet.pdf

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For more information:

- Able Data - http://www.abledata.com/
- ADA National Network - http://adata.org/
- The National Public Website on Assistive Technology- http://assistivetech.net/
- Job Accommodation Network (JAN) – www.askjan.org
- US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission- http://www.eeoc.gov/
- Information and Technical Assistance on the Americans With Disabilities Act- http://www.ada.gov/
- National Organization on Disability (NOD) - http://nod.org/

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Other Resources

- State Assistive Technology Program
- Independent Living Centers
- State Vocational Rehabilitation
- Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Partners
- Job Accommodation Network (JAN)
  - http://askjan.org/
  - http://askjan.org/webcast/archive/

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College Accommodations

Reasonable Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities

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Where to Get the Assistive Technology

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qb7jBbp-EXE

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Where to Get the Assistive Technology

A recent report from the National Center for Education Statistics states:
over 2.5 million college students, around 11%, live with a disability.
Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students
Students With Visual Impairments
Students with Physical Disabilities
Students with Learning Disabilities
Students with Psychiatric Disabilities

Check out: BestColleges.com's collection of guides for students with disabilities
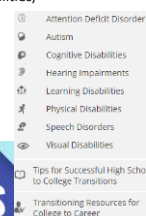
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Assistive Technology and Transition to College

Guiding Document for
Assistive Technology Transition
and
Transition Planning Worksheet
For AT Users
http://www.qiat.org/resources.html

College Accommodations

http://www.affordablecollegesonline.org/college-resource-center/resources-for-students-with-disabilities/

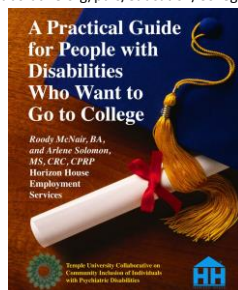## College Accommodations

http://tucollaborative.org/pdfs/education/College_Guide.pdf

College Accommodations

Work Early, Work Often: Employers of Young Adults with Disabilities
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jqIEBBwtMB0&feature=youtu.be
"Work Early, Work Often" is a video series created by the Youth Transitions Collaborative. Together, the three-part campaign highlights the importance of work and work-based experiences in an individual's transition to adulthood, particularly for young adults with disabilities. In this video, listen to employers discuss how exposing young adults with disabilities to real work experiences can help to meet the needs of a business and improve their bottom line. Visit www.thenytc.org to learn more

College Accommodations

Navigating College

A Project of The Autistic Self Advocacy Network

http://navigatingcollege.org/download.php

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Sample Assistive Technology Devices for the Work, College, and the Community

**Remember – assistive technology selection is based on needs and function,
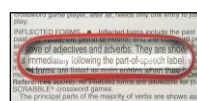not the name of the disability!**

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Individuals Who Are Blind or Have Low Vision

- **Optical Character Recognition System**
- **Screen readers**
- **Alternative formats-braille or large print**
- **Screen magnifiers**
- **CCTV- Closed Circuit Television**
- **Bump Dots**
- **GPS**

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Magnifiers

Bar Magnifier

Desktop Video Magnifier

Illuminated Magnifier

Hand & Stand Magnifier

Handheld CCTV

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Individuals Who Are Blind or Have Low Vision

KNFB Reader app

VisionAssist app

CCTV

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Text-to-Speech Software

WordQ

Balabolka

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Individuals Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

- **Certified sign language interpreter**
- **TTY**
- **Relay – 711**
- **Telephones with amplification devices or video messaging**
- **Fire alarm with flashing lights**
- **Assistive listening devices (infrared, Loop, FM, and closed captioning decoders)**
- **Real-time captioning for video or web conferences**

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Amplified Phones

In-line amplifier

Portable amplifier

Big button phone

Cordless amplified phone

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Telecommunication Devices

TTY with Large Visual Display

Handset Stand

Voice Carry-Over (VCO) Phone

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Frequency Modulated (FM) Systems for Sound Amplification

Williams Sound Personal FM System

Conference Microphone

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Individuals with Physical Disabilities

- Trackball computer mouse
- Touch screens
- Ergonomic keyboard
- Ergonomic chairs
- Adjustable keyboard and monitor stands
- Writing and grip aids
- Adjustable height desks and chairs
- Devices for communication
- Stand/lean stools
- Page turners
- Book holders

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Ergonomic Keyboards

Contoured Keyboard

Goldtouch Keyboard

Ergonomic Keyboard

Keypad

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Typing Aids

Standard keyboard with acrylic keyguard

Slip-on typing aid

Trackballs

Kensington Turbo Mouse

Microsoft Optical Trackball

Penny & Giles Roller Trackball

Evoluent Vertical Mouse

Arm & Wrist Supports

ErgoRest Forearm Support

Gel Wrist Rests

Ergonomic Chairs

Work Pro

Raynor Eurotech Ergo

Herman Miller Aeron Chair

Ergonomic Desks

Workrite Sierra HXL Crank Height Adjustable Desk

Humanscale QuickStand Desktop Sit-Stand Workstation

Populas Vox Height Adjustable Perfect Corner Desk

Individuals with Cognitive, Intellectual, and Developmental Disabilities

- Telephone autodialer
- Larger buttons on equipment
- Tablets or iPhones
- Memory aids
- Index cards with directions for how to perform tasks.
- Schedules
- Digital planners

Talking Products

Talking Tape Measure

Talking Microwave

Talking Calculator

Talking Thermostat

Money Identifier

Talking Bathroom Scale

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Individuals with Learning Disabilities

- Automatic line guides
- Reading and writing templates
- Computer with voice output
- Colored labeling system
- Audio recordings
- Color Overlays
- Words highlighted as read

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Where to Get the Assistive Technology

- Always ask the person who needs it.
- Contact an assistive technology specialist for an evaluation.
- Contact your state Assistive Technology Program
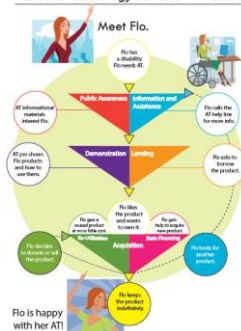- Search internet, local stores, etc.

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SC Assistive Technology Program Services

- Equipment demonstration center
- Equipment loan program
- AT Exchange
- AT Reuse Program
- Training
- Telephone Technical Assistance
- Annual Free Expo

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