EQUIL
Equality in Learning

Training Module:

Educator/practitioners skills for supporting employers to employ and retain people with lived experience

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www.equilcoproduction.eu

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Partners

Coordinator:
Merseyside Expanding Horizons
www.expandinghorizons.co.uk
United Kingdom

Mersey Care NHS Trust
www.merseycare.nhs.uk
United Kingdom

Accion Laboral
www.accionlaboral.com
Spain

MhtConsult
www.mhtconsult.dk
Denmark

CESIE
www.cesie.org
Italy

Zorgvragersorganisatie GGZ Midden Holland
www.zogmh.nl
Netherlands

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INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

The development of this training programme has been realized based on the co-production model which includes expert practitioners, people with lived experience and employers. It includes a range of tools and exercises to enable Practitioners to support and encourage employers to recruit people who may have experienced mental ill health. It also provides Practitioners with skills to support employers to retain existing staff who may be at risk of unemployment due to their experience of mental ill health and to support the mental well-being of their whole workforce.

The product has been developed taking into account key findings of C1 Learning Mobility, focus group with people with lived experiences, feedback from collected surveys, desk based research and further suggestions from partnership or involved stakeholders (peer support, facilitators or experts).

After the interviewing of several employers in each country, **different situations have been observed about relations between entreprises and people with lived experiences** showing that the labour market and employers expectations are very different between UK, Italy, Netherlands, Denmark and Spain.

Even if many differences have been observed, **some transversal topics** have also been outlined and have constituted the base of training module.

The **needs and expectations** revealed by employers of the different countries involved in the project to contract and retain people who have experienced mental ill health are:

- Aclaration about what is meant by Mental ill health from a psychological point of view
- Aclaration about what is meant by Mental ill health from a labour point of view (employability)
- Review of the legal framework in each country and subsidies existed
- Hard and soft skills presented by people who have experienced mental ill health
- How can I introduce these items to my clients and suppliers
- Relation between types of work and level of integration of the workers
- Team building aspects for a deseable integration
- Evaluation of the impact of these workers in my organisation

Considering these needs and expectations, the structure of the training course includes practical tools and exercises that will prepare and qualify practionners in their work with employers to achieve the integration of end users in labour market.

OVERVIEW. GUIDELINE OF THE INTELECTUAL OUTPUT

STEP 1. HOW TO CONTACT POSSIBLE EMPLOYERS

STEP 2. POSITIVE ASPECTS TO ENHANCE ABOUT RECRUITING PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILL HEALTH

STEP 3. HOW TO PREPARE EMPLOYERS ABOUT BARRIERS THEY MAY DEALWITH AFTER THE RECRUITMENT OF PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILL HEALTH

STEP 4. RETENTION OF THE NEW WORKERS IN THE ORGANISATION

STEP 1. HOW TO CONTACT POSSIBLE EMPLOYERS

Activity 1 How should the practictioners present the concept of “mental ill health” beyond the generalized stereotipes and prepare end-users to present theirselfs

As a practitionner,your first work is to attend and prepare people who have lived mental health ill to enter in the labour market (items developed in others training modules of the project).

Regarding the work of contacting employers to give oportunities to your end-users to obtain a job, the first reflection you should have would be regarding the concept of “mental ill health” and how to introduce to employers.

The problematic and point of view that should be adopted is radically different between practitioners and employers.

Your main work will be to explain them that our end-users can and should be considered as workers like others that only need some special support to be integrated in the organisation. The transitional cost that could be this special support (see in activity mentors or tutors) are in most of countries covered by special subsidies.

HOW SHOULD I PRESENT MYSELF TO EMPLOYERS AS PROFESSIONAL? ELEVATOR PITCH FOR PEOPLE WITH MIH

Introduction

Premise:

The surveys have shown that one of the principal barriers existing for people with mental ill health to integrate the labor market is the stigma and employers lack of knowledge about the talent of people with mental ill health.

Most of time, this fact can stop them for contracting people with mental ill health.

Solution proposed:

One of the solutions provided to counteract this barrier is through the techniques of the Elevator Pitch that will allow preparing an adequate presentation to be used during interviews.

Skill assessment:

The purposes of a "skill assessment" are:

- Identify and evaluate knowledge, abilities and skills.
- Identify and evaluate interests, expectations, values and motivations.
- Define the personal and professional profile
- Analyze the transferability based on critical skills
- Identify professional alternatives
- Design custom plans for professional career management

DIAGRAM OF A SKILL ASSESSMENT

It includes:

Professional profile analysis

- Knowledge
- Abilities
- Skills
- Versatility
- Transferability

Personal profile analysis

- Interests
- Motivations
- Expectations
- Values
- Familiar situation
- Life project

Labour market analysis

- Unemployment rates
- Sectors of activity
- Business fabric
- Sources of employment
- Employment vacancies
- Hiring conditions

The mental ill health is just one characterizes in their skills balance.

Elevator pitch:

After having analyzed their skill and personal profile, people with mental ill health with the help of their practitioner should prepare a short presentation of their selves based on the "Elevator Pitch" advices.

Traditionally, an elevator pitch aimed to present a business to potential investor in 5 minutes, outlining its strengths.

Regarding job research, elevator pitch have been used more and more in the last years so that unemployed people could present themselves in a more effective way emphasizing their strengths (professional and social).

The participants imagine a casual lift encounter with a entrepreneur or human resources manager of a company in which they want to work, they have just 2 minutes in the lift to take advantage and present themselves as a candidate for their company Are you going to miss the opportunity? Would you know how to present yourself in such a short time in an effective and attractive way for the employer?

In the context of EQUIL project, the objective of the activity is to prepare people with mental ill health to present their selves in interviews integrating their "living experiences" in a complete description of their profile showing that their skills match with employer's needs.

Explication of the activity

The exercise consists in the realization of an exercise of **role playing**.

The participants should be organized in **groups of 2 people.**

It will be delivered to each group **a description of a people with mental ill health** that will include a description of their experience, education background, personal profile and mental ill health.

Each group will prepare a "professional presentation" using the technique of elevator pitch presented (20 minutes):

The presentation aims to capture and maintain the attention of your interlocutor in a very short time and in an unexpected way, so it has to be very clear what to say according to the objective pursued (in this case be considered for a position of work and present our experience of having overcome episodes of mental illness as a process of overcoming and

developing new skills that can add value rather than a prejudiced inconvenience or cause for misgivings.

The presentation should contain at least the following elements:

- Introduce yourself / Say who you are (best in a funny way) and your best skills / abilities

- Indicate what you do, have done or know how to do (training, other types of experiences) at work level

- What you would love (regarding the possible work to be done)

Remember that you have very short time to present yourself, catch the attention and make a good impression, so is advisable being brief, concrete and original.

Each group will present the presentation it has prepared.

(See below the description of 4 hypothetical individuals with lived experience of mental ill health)

General reflection to realize after the presentation:

Do you think it has been an effective presentation?

Regarding the following aspects:

- Professional experience
- Education background
- Personal profile and interests
- Mental health ill

How would you improve the presentation?

Do you think this presentation would be effective against stigma?

Four profiles of people with mental ill health

SUSANA

Age: 33 years old

Mental ill health: Depression

Moment of apparition of mental ill health: 18 years old

Education background: Vocational Training in Administration

Professional experience: Receptionist and secretary (5 years in total)

Soft skills: organized, honesty, responsible

JOSE CARLOS

Age: 31 years old

Mental ill health: Schizophrenia

Moment of apparition of mental ill health: 20 years old

Education background: vocational training-Metal sector

Professional experience: 3 years as waiter

Soft skills: empathy, team work, problem oriented

JAVIER

Age: 42 years old

Mental ill health: Bi-Polar Disorder

Moment of apparition of mental ill health: 28 years old

Education background: Vocational Training in Welding

Professional experience: Industry sector during 15 years

Soft skills: Hard worker, responsibility

CLARA

Age: 51 years old

Mental ill health: Personality Disorder

Moment of apparition of mental ill health: 22 years old

Education background: Elementary school

Professional experience: dressmaker (30 years old)

Soft skills: Hard worker, honesty, punctuality

STIGMAS IN EMPLOYERS STRATEGIES TO IMPLEMENT IN PROFESSIONAL INTERVIEWS

Introduction

The surveys have shown that one of the principal barriers existing for people with MIH to integrate the labor market is the stigma and lack of knowledge of employers about skills of people with mental ill health. Even if the reality can be very different depending on the country.

In the exercise I, a first step has been done working and thinking about how should I present myself in an interview in an effective way (elaboration of a good Elevator Pitch).

Practitioners should spend some time with end-users to prepare their Elevator Pitch.

Nevertheless, even if it is essential to make a good presentation of myself, end-users should also be prepared for the reaction of employers during interviews and for the different questions they will have to answer.

Explication of the activity

The exercise consists in the realization of a role playing.

The participants should be organized in **2 groups**: end users and employers.

It will be delivered to all employers **a description of its profile** (based on real case of the surveys)

The end-users will be the same that the previous day.

In a random way, each employer will be matched with an end-user.

The end-user will start with its presentation without knowing which kind of employers it is, and will have to adapt its answers according to the questions of the employer.

The other participants will be “observatory” of each interview.

General reflection to realize after the presentation:

- How should we answer to stigma questions?
- What kind of strategies is more effective against reticent employers?
- What kind of questions let me present my strengths better?

What should we obtain to integrate in Training Module

- Do extensive research on the Company
- Anticipate questions you might be asked
- Arrive early and prepared for the interview

STEP 2. POSITIVE ASPECTS TO ENHANCE ABOUT RECRUITING PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILL HEALTH

Activity 3 Positive aspects related to subsidies that exist in each country – Macro point of view

FRAMEWORK AND SUBSIDES

Introduction

The regulations and framework documents that affect social organizations and professionals working in the field of the integration of people with disabilities and mental health problems can do so at three decision levels: European and international, national and regional.

Currently in Spain there is no specific legislation or regulation for people with mental illness, so they must be governed by Spanish legislation on disability in general and other regulations that refer to disability.

This fact makes it necessary for practitioners to be clear about the importance of identifying the context and legal framework in a broader way to know the subsidies and supports that can be chosen by people with mental ill health, facilitating their integration into the labor market.

Explication of the activity

The exercise consists in the description of:

1 Framework in your country.

2 Which kind of subsidies do exist in your country?

General reflection to realize after the presentation:

- Which is the current situation in our country?
- Do the subsidies existing really work?

What should we obtain to integrate in Training Module

- Clarify the points needed to be changed in each framework.
- Make a list of useless subsidies and another which would be very useful according each country.

Activity 4 Evaluation of soft skills of workers- Micro point of view

SOFT SKILLS

Introduction

When presenting to a job interview, the skills we show are called Hard Skills; Are based on knowledge acquired and memorized throughout our years of training and is the first thing we value the person who is evaluating us at those times. Now, when we are part of a team, the skills we use are known as Soft Skills and are the skills of a professional that allow you to relate better and develop to perfection before adversities being essential for everything the world. Both, of course, are complementary.

In short, Soft Skills are the set of characteristics that make us stand out as good professionals, are the talents that make us know how to communicate correctly, lead a group of people, solve a conflict between peers or know how to motivate and listen to those around us. Some of the most valued are:

Motivation, negotiation, delegation, time management, personal interaction and communication, conflict resolution, public presentations, etc.

Today it is not enough that you are the best technically (that is, make use of your Hard Skills) but also that you need to develop your interpersonal skills (Soft Skills) and use them correctly in your projects. In our day to day, the right balance between your technical and interpersonal skills (Hard Skills and Soft Skills) is the key to achieving the success of your projects and your business.

In turn, having full knowledge of your interpersonal skills and knowing how to use them, will not only help you achieve your work goals, but you will achieve with less effort.

Moving from theory to practice is what costs the most effort in Soft skills, called soft because of their adaptability, because they do not obey a fixed rule and because they are evolutionary, improvable, moldable, shapeable.

When we match our hard and soft skills, we open the range of our possibilities for interaction and interrelation, and that moving from theory to practice requires a space or environment in which learning and sharing of knowledge and experience can occur in pairs And in confidence.

Explication of the activity

In the framework of EQUIL project, we will focus on **soft skills** as hard skills are much wider depending on job and sectors.

After the analysis of a range of soft skills, we have selected for our end-users 10 of them to be evaluated at the moment of hiring and the months after the contracting to evaluate their integration in the organization (impact of tutor/mentor work and team building exercises).

The 10 skills selected are:

1. *Honesty*
2. *Empathy*
3. *Responsibility*
4. *Integrity*
5. *Problem solving*
6. *Team work*
7. *Optimism*
8. *Adaptation to change*
9. *Flexibility*
10. *Customer orientation*

These skills / competencies should be reflected in the evaluation grid by professionals according to the evolution observed in end users, loo that will facilitate the support to improve the competences and enhance their integration in companies.

Evaluation grid:

SKILL	DEFINITION	KEY QUESTION	TOP BEHA-VIOUR	DEFICIENCE BEHAVIOUR	LEVEL (1-5)
Honesty					
Empathy					
Responsibility					
Integrity					
Problem solving					
Team work					
Optimism					
Adaptation to change					
Flexibility					
Customer orientation					

General reflection to realize after the presentation:

- Which are the soft skills of the new workers?
- Have they developed special soft skills thank to their lived experiences?

What should we obtain to integrate in Training Module

- Thank to this tool we will see and validate the soft skills of our workers and make this way them feel worth and useful

Activity 5 Positive aspects related to the add value that will imply for me as an organisation/ recruiter- Reflection level

BRAINSTORMING ABOUT CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Introduction

What is Corporate social responsibility?

According to Wikipedia, Corporate social responsibility (CSR, also called corporate conscience, corporate citizenship or responsible business) is a form of corporate self-regulation integrated into a business model.

CSR policy functions as a self-regulatory mechanism whereby a business monitors and ensures its active compliance with the spirit of the law, ethical standards and national or international norms.

The aim is to increase long-term profits and shareholder trust through positive public relations and high ethical standards to reduce business and legal risk by taking responsibility for corporate actions. CSR strategies encourage the company to make a positive impact on the environment and stakeholders including consumers, employees, investors, communities, and others.

EFQM Model:

Last year, Acción Laboral has been working in updating its philosophy and objectives in the frame of the EFQM Excellence Model. This model provides an holistic view of the organization and it can be used to determine how these different methods fit together and complement each other. The Model can therefore be used in conjunction with any number of these tools, based on the needs and function of the organization, as an overarching framework for developing sustainable excellence.

Excellent organizations achieve and sustain outstanding levels of performance that meet or exceed the expectations of all their stakeholders. The EFQM Excellence Model allows people to understand the cause and effect relationships between what their organization does and the Results it achieves.

How is it related to EQUIL project?

When Practitioners and end-users will contract employers for possible hiring it will be important to know Macro Framework (subsidies and legislation) but also going a step ahead with some “reflection” analysis of what supposes to my organization to contract people with mental health ill and living experience.

In line with their CSR strategy, they could evaluate the add value it can suppose.

Explication of the activity

The exercise consists in a reflection about what positive effects would suppose contracting

end-users for organization from a CSR point of view.

The participants should be organized in groups of 2 people.

Each group will work with a profile of enterprise used in Exercise II and will think about positive aspects of contracting people with mental ill health.

Each group will present its tips and a session of brainstorming of ideas will start.

General reflection to realize after the presentation:

Is CSR important for organizations nowadays?

How contracting people with living experience would have an effect in CSR?

How should we present it to organizations (depending on their profile and knowledge they have about it)?

What should we obtain to integrate in Training Module

Benefits of recruitment people with mental health issues for your company:

- Improvement of work environment
- Awareness the rest of the staff
- Decrease of work absenteeism
- Greater commitment
- It allows efficient workers work on specific tasks
- Improvement of corporate reputation

STEP 3. HOW TO PREPARE EMPLOYERS TO BREAK BARRIERS THAT CAN BE FOUND AFTER THE RECRUITMENT OF PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILL HEALTH

For the employers is important to know how to recruit and retain people with mental health issues in their companies. They need to be aware of the barriers they will face and be able to overcome them.

There are activities that employers can develop in their workplaces in three interrelated areas:

1. Prevention: how to prevent mental health problems at work
2. Recovery: How to help people with mild or moderate mental illness during the recovery process while they are being treated whether they stay at work or not
3. Reincorporation to work: how to help these people in their return to work and how to give them the help they need

Integrating these dynamics into the organization is beneficial to any work environment and must be accepted by all employers, since the short and medium term benefits are perceived immediately, but also great long-term benefits Which can contribute to the development of the company.

Activity 6 Is my organisation prepared to recruit people with mental ill health? Break the barriers !!

BREAK THE BARRIES IN YOUR COMPANY

Introduction

When an employee is perceived to be different because of their mental health problem is a clear example of stigma.

Addressing stigma and discrimination and developing a culture where employees feel able to speak openly about their mental health problems should be a number one priority within any organization.

Explication of the activity

Contact different employers to offer them the possibility of hiring through practices or in the test of pressure with mental illness.

This will show this reality to the business world and contribute to overthrowing misconceptions about this collective.

In these agreements we commit ourselves to provide a job counseling service, to carry out individualized follow-up of cases and to support both the fellows and those in charge of company personnel.

General reflection to realize after the presentation:

- What is the reaction of the employers?
- Do they accept at first?
- Do they change their negative minds when we mention the counseling service?

What should we obtain to integrate in Training Module

- How to address better the mental health issues.
- More empowerment for employers and employees struggling with mental health issues.
- Faster and easier integration in the company.

Activity 7 How should I introduce my new workers to providers and clients

PROVIDERS AND CLIENTS

Introduction

Normalize these workers into a company is something that should not be so difficult, but in most of cases they have to face barriers difficult to overcome. These barriers appear not just among the workers but also in the relations with providers and clients of the enterprise.

Explication of the activity

Introduce these workers to providers is a way to empower them and make them feel valued and worth. Express empathy and believe in self-efficacy of these new workers in front providers and clients is key. Developing long-term strategies in the organization is most effective when coupled with direct services that assist workers who require support and reasonable adjustments in the workplace.

Treat workers with mental health issues as workers without these problems is the best way to integrate them and create a safe workplace where they can develop themselves and overcome the obstacles.

In order to improve this environment, we can create a group of workers (with mental health issues and without) telling what the points to improve on the company are and what they think pros and contras are (including how are they treated and presented)

Thereby, workers with mental health issues can see that they are not the only ones dealing with problems in the work environment.

General reflection to realize after the presentation:

- Did I normalize these workers into my company?
- How my clients and providers accept these workers?
- Did my new workers feel they worth?

What should we obtain to integrate in Training Module

- Make the new workers feel they are already integrated
- Make them feel equal as the other workers at the company

Activity 8 Team Building strategies for the integration of my new workers

INTEGRATION AND TEAM BUILDING

Introduction

Modern business greets diversity. Standardizing the difference and promoting equal opportunities are included in the first chapter of the ethical codes of the most successful companies. To the social and labor benefits of the application of these policies are added the financial ones, as the most reliable analyzes in the matter argue. And yet, there is still a long way to go.

Are we truly open to diversity in our organizations? Collective behavior sometimes requires internal reflection. Facing diversity involves addressing our own prejudices. Especially those we ignore. The change in the organization starts with oneself

Explication of the activity

To improve the integration of workers in the company, it is important to develop dynamics that help facilitate this work, creating adequate working climates for the professional development of employees.

There is a dynamic called “Best Team”, which consists of:

- Two cards, one green and one red
- Each member must write 3 strengths on the green and 3 things a partner must have to work on his team in the red
- Then all the green cards are joined on one side and the red cards on the other
- Then check the actual equipment (green) and the ideal equipment (red).

Thus we study strengths and weaknesses, and learn how to improve and enhance both. An integration game for companies highly valued by Human Resources professionals.

General reflection to realize after the presentation:

- How goes forward the integration of people with mental issues in my company?
- Is there a real “team spirit” among my workers?
- Are my HR professionals ready to face this situation?

What should we obtain to integrate in Training Module

- Real integration and safe work environment
- Achieve full equality for all the company workers
- Make vulnerable workers feel worth and part of a team

Activity 9 The role of mentors and/or tutors

Most of employers contacted during the elaboration of training module have emphatized on the fact that the hiring of people with living experience should always include the figure of a tutor or mentor. This measure will ensure a better integration, staff retention and higher productivity.

What is a tutor or mentor?

The mentor has large responsabilities,it is charged with helping people think through important decisions and directions in their careers, specially in this case, guiding people with mental health issues. A mentor might offer a guidance on developing strategies and expanding working abilities. Also, guiding to how deal with problems in the work environment. A coach would look for specific behavioral issues to help to strengthen or develop; a mentor will guide the person with compass directions for their career map. It is very important count on this mentor role at the company to support and guide these workers.

Serving as a mentor is both rewarding and supportive of your own development as a person and a professional. Values as patience, and wisdom are key for any mentor. This is an important endeavor in support of others and the most important point is always puting the person interests on the first place.

THE MENTOR

Introduction

Mentoring is a process by which a person with experience

Helps another person achieve their goals and cultivate their skills through a series of personal, confidential, time-limited conversations and other learning activities. Mentors also benefit from the mentoring relationship. As a mentor, you will have the opportunity to share your wisdom and experiences, evolve in your thinking, develop a new relationship and further deepen your mentor skills.

Explication of the activity

There are some qualities needed in any mentor such as: be aware, be proactive, be considered, be positive, be relationship-focused, be perseverant and be informed.

There is an activity helping the mentor and the vulnerable person to know better each other.

Play the “Who, what, when, where, why, how” game. Get ready 6 pieces of paper and on each write “who”, “what”, “when”, “where”, “why” and “how”. In turns, tell an important story inspired in your own life, and take turns drawing one of the pieces of paper and answering a made up “who”, “what”, “when”, “where”, “why” or “how” about the story. Not only the person but the mentor will tell a personal story to empathize and create bonds.

General reflection to realize after the presentation:

- How important is the mentor role?
- What special support does need a person dealing with these issues?
- In which way will help my workers this kind of support?

What should we obtain to integrate in Training Module

- Mentor are a fundamental part of the project success
- Mentor role is important for the workers but for the employers as well, in order to make easier the workers integration and their work development.

STEP 4. RETENTION OF THE NEW WORKERS IN THE ORGANISATION

The retention of workers with mental health issues at the compay is one of the purposes of EQUIL. There are some paths employers can follow to get this objetive such as: Promote from within whenever possible, foster employee development, create open communication between employees and management, empower mentor role, make sure employees know what you expect of them and make worth special skills from these kind of employees.

Activity 10 How to evaluate the evolution of the new workers since their recruitment and possible impact in the organisation

EVOLUTION OF THE NEW WORKERS

Introduction

At the beginning, we checked the Soft Skills (the set of characteristics that make us stand out as good professionals) of the people with mental health issues we wanted to recruit. Now, after a while after we will use the same tool to check their development.

Explication of the activity

To evaluate the evolution of these skills / competencies should we will use again the evaluation grid by professionals but this time after some time working on the company. Thank this we will know how they have improved.

SKILL	LEVEL AT THE RECRUITMENT (1-5)	ACTIONS IMPLEMEN-TED FOR IMPROVE-MENT	CURRENT LEVEL (1-5)	SUGGESTION FOR I MPROVMENT
Honesty				
Empathy				
Responsibility				
Integrity				
Problem solving				

Team work				
Optimism				
Adaptation to change				
Flexibility				
Customer orientation				

Suggestion for improvement: These actions can be

- Training courses
- Mentoring Support

General reflection to realize after the presentation:

- How has been the development of the soft skills of my new workers?
- Have they improved their soft skills since they were recruited in the company?

What should we obtain to integrate in Training Module

This tool created to measure the soft skills has really helped them to improve their soft skills and feel motivated and empowered.

Activity 11 Tips about why it is important to retain the contracted people

RETENTION TIPS

Introduction

The retention of workers at the company improves the people confidence as well as the well-functioning of the work environment. Make your employees feel valued and proud of their work, this will create a strong branding strategy, and will immediately improve the rates of the organization. Develop a work culture that encourages diversity and creativity and put in place effective anti-discrimination policies that promote flexible working, where possible.

Explication of the activity

Some methods can help this retention and development:

- Ensure those people with issues being recruited have a realistic idea of what the job entails.
- Improved career development opportunities.
- Effective appraisals.
- Mentors for support and empowerment.
- Strong diversity policies.
- A practicable means of dealing with bullying and marginalization.
- A good work/life balance.
- A mechanism for staff to register dissatisfaction, whether it be appraisals, grievance proceeding and so on.
- Leadership training for managers.
- Adapting workplace and tasks to the individual needs of each worker.
- Make sure your workplace is inclusive and doesn't create barriers for people with disabilities.
- Employers are expected to be flexible, for example providing allowing time off for appointments.

General reflection to realize after the presentation:

- Have my workers mentioned certain importance on some methods more than others?
- Have my workers mentioned certain weaknesses of the system related to their vulnerable situation?

What should we obtain to integrate in Training Module

- Make the required changes designated to improve the retention of and development of workers.
- Create a safer environment both for the new workers and the old ones.

EQUIL

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