

# AAHD

American Association on Health and Disability  
110 N. Washington Street • Suite 340-A Rockville, MD 20850

---

## RESEARCH ON MENTORING AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

### INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

**Paths to leisure physical activity among adults with intellectual disabilities: self-efficacy and social support.**

Peterson JJ, Lowe JB, Peterson NA, Nothwehr FK, Janz KF, Lobas JG. Oregon Health and Science University, Child Development and Rehabilitation Center, 3181 Sam Jackson Park Road, Portland, OR 97239, USA. [peterjan@ohsu.edu](mailto:peterjan@ohsu.edu) Am J Health Promot. 2008 Sep-Oct;23(1):35-42.

**PURPOSE:** This study tested a path model that included perceptions of social support and self-efficacy for leisure physical activity and leisure physical activity participation among adults with intellectual disabilities.

**DESIGN:** A cross-sectional design was used. Data was collected via oral interview.

**SETTING:** Community-based group, supported-living settings in one Midwestern state.

**SAMPLE:** A total of 152 adults with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities, which provided a 39% response rate.

**MEASURES:** Self-efficacy and social support (from family, residential staff and peers with disabilities) for leisure physical activity were assessed using self-reported scales. Leisure physical activity participation was measured with a self-reported checklist of the frequency of leisure physical activity participation.

**ANALYSIS:** Path analysis was conducted for the entire sample and was repeated for younger and older age groups.

**RESULTS:** The hypothesized model fit the data from each group. Social support and self-efficacy predicted physical activity participation, and self-efficacy served as a mediator between social support and physical activity. Significant sources of social support differed between groups; among younger participants, social support from family predicted physical activity, whereas, for the older group, social support from staff and peers predicted physical activity.

**CONCLUSION:** Self-efficacy and social support for leisure physical activity are related to leisure physical activity participation among adults with intellectual disabilities who are receiving supported-living services. The results provide information to guide health promotion programs for this group.

**Promoting friendship through best buddies: a national survey of college program participants.**

Hardman ML, Clark C. Department of Special Education, 1705 E. Campus Center Dr., Rm. 221, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT 84112, USA. [hardman@ed.utah.edu](mailto:hardman@ed.utah.edu) Ment Retard. 2006 Feb;44(1):56-63.

Best Buddies is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to enhance the lives of people with intellectual disabilities through one-to-one friendships with individuals without disabilities. A cross-sectional survey was conducted with Best Buddies College Program participants located within the United States. Survey findings suggest that college students and people with intellectual disabilities benefited from participation in Best Buddies. The vast majority of college students and people with intellectual disabilities reported enjoying their experience and engaging in friendship activities that were mutually beneficial to those involved. Most people with intellectual disabilities also indicated their lives had been enhanced as a result of Best Buddies, although the percentage was lower than that of college students.

## WORKPLACE SUPPORT

### **An exploration of social support as a factor in the return-to-work process.**

Lysaght RM, Larmour-Trode S. Queen's University, School of Rehabilitation Therapy, Kingston, Ontario, Canada. [lysaght@post.queensu.ca](mailto:lysaght@post.queensu.ca) *Work*. 2008;30(3):255-66.

Despite evidence that inter-personal relationships are important in human resource management, little is understood about the nature of workplace social support in a disability context, or what features of support are important to the success of return-to-work programs. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore workplace disability support from worker and supervisory perspectives and to identify salient features for work re-entry. A total of 8 supervisors and 18 previously injured workers from a range of work units in a Canadian municipality were interviewed, and their views concerning supportive and unsupportive behaviours in work-re-entry situations were recorded and analyzed. A full range of social support dimensions were reported to be relevant, and were seen as arising from a variety of sources (e.g. supervisor, co-workers, disability manager, work unit, and outside of work). Respondents identified trust, communication and knowledge of disability as key precursors to a successful return-to-work process. Future research should explore the specific contributions of support to work rehabilitation outcomes as well as interventions to enhance available supports.

### **People into employment: supporting people with disabilities and carers into work.**

Arksey H. Social Policy Research Unit, University of York, York, UK. [ha4@york.ac.uk](mailto:ha4@york.ac.uk) *Health Soc Care Community*. 2003 May;11(3):283-92.

Carers and people with disabilities are two disadvantaged groups at risk of social exclusion. Work is an important route to social inclusion, but carers and people with disabilities are under-represented in the work force. The present paper reports key findings from a new study that evaluated People into Employment (PIE), a pilot employment project in the north-east of England designed to support people with disabilities, carers and former carers in gaining mainstream work. The study aimed to identify what clients, partner agencies and employers perceived to be PIE's most important services, its strengths and areas where there was scope for further development. The study collected quantitative and qualitative data at the mid-point and at the end of the project through two questionnaire surveys, and interviews with PIE clients, the project development officer, partner agencies and employers. Drawing on the

'pathway model', the findings show that PIE's interventions included mobilising, matching, mediating and supporting activities. Key ingredients in PIE's success include: tailor-made job-search activities and training; adjusting the pace at which people move towards sustained employment; recognising and responding to the differing needs of people with disabilities, carers and former carers; confidence boosting; accompanying clients to job interviews; good job matching; and ongoing practical and emotional support for both clients and employers. Rudimentary calculations suggest that the cost per job to the project is less than the cost per job for large national projects. Overall, these findings illustrate how access to employment via flexible job-search services geared up to the local labour market can successfully promote social inclusion for carers and people with disabilities.

**A review of research on natural support interventions in the workplace for people with disabilities.**

Storey K. Chapman University, 2600 Stanwell Drive, Suite 110, Concord, CA 94520, USA. [storey@chapman.edu](mailto:storey@chapman.edu) Int J Rehabil Res. 2003 Jun;26(2):79-84.

Natural supports for workers with disabilities involve using co-workers, supervisors and other supports intrinsic to the job setting to facilitate job skill acquisition, maintenance and integration. The purpose of this article is to review the empirical literature related to natural supports in the workplace for increasing integration and to offer guidelines for implementation. The sources used are case studies and empirical research. Conclusions are offered in terms of limitations of current research, needs for future research and the changing roles of supported employment services.

**Vocteer: a collaborative volunteer program for persons with severe psychiatric disabilities.**

Carone SA, Burker EJ, Gardner M. Department of Counseling, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, USA. [scarone@iup.edu](mailto:scarone@iup.edu) Psychiatr Rehabil J. 2007 Fall;31(2):149-51.

Vocteer is a university and community support agency collaborative program that matches undergraduate and graduate students with persons diagnosed with severe psychiatric disabilities in community-based volunteer positions. The program aims to improve self-esteem, community inclusion, and vocational skills of program participants. In addition, Vocteer helps participants develop skills necessary for employment or independent volunteering. The program, reports of participant satisfaction, and findings are described. Reports from the literature are presented and provide support for further exploration and development of such programs.

## YOUTH MENTORING

**Creating an e-mentoring community.**

Burgstahler S. National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET), University of Minnesota Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, 6 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455. Tel: 612-624-2097; Fax: 612-624-9344; e-mail: [ncset@umn.edu](mailto:ncset@umn.edu); Web site: <http://www.ncset.org> Information

Brief of the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET). Volume 5, Issue 4 Aug. 2006

**ABSTRACT:** This brief provides an example of how to create and sustain an e-mentoring community to promote the success of youth with disabilities in school, careers, and other life experiences. Established in 1992, the DO-IT (Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology) e-mentoring community may have been the first intentional Internet-based mentoring community for teenagers with disabilities. Its value has been documented in research and reflected in the successful lives of its participants and the willingness of those who were once proteges in the program to become e-mentors themselves.

**Creating mentoring opportunities for youth with disabilities: issues and suggested strategies.**

Sword C, Hill K. U.S. Rehabilitation Services Administration. American Rehabilitation Sept. 2003.

Mentoring can have a dramatic impact on a young person's life. Despite the increasing prevalence and importance of mentoring programs for youth in general, few of these programs, to date, intentionally include youth with disabilities.

Research has demonstrated the effectiveness of mentoring in helping youth develop skills, knowledge and motivation to successfully transition from high school to adult life (Moccia, Schumaker, Hazel, Vernon & Deshler, 1989; Rhodes, Grossman & Resch, 2000). This transition is a major goal of youth with disabilities--one supported both by school systems and by federal policy. Research on mentoring programs, however, reflects a lack of focus on specific applications of these programs for youth with disabilities. A review of 15 years of research on mentoring within organizations across the United States identifies demographics and risk factors for youth, but does not directly address disability as one of those factors (Sipe, 1999). A random national survey of 1,504 adult mentors identified several variables, such as academic performance, race and socioeconomic factors; however, it does not directly address issues of disability (McLearn, Colasanto, Schoen & Shapiro, 1999).

Youth with disabilities may be participating in mentoring programs, but program managers and mentors may be unaware of how disabilities affect mentoring relationships. The reason for this lack of attention to disability issues is unclear.

**DO-IT: helping students with disabilities transition to college and careers.**

Burgstahler S. Improving Secondary Education and Transition Services through Research: Research to Practice Brief September 2003, Vol. 2, Issue 3

**SUMMARY:** This publication summarizes research on issues related to positive school and employment outcomes for students with disabilities. Second, it describes one program, DO-IT Scholars, that successfully applies research findings in a cohesive set of interventions for students who have disabilities. Last, it shares lessons that can be applied to other college and career preparation programs for teens with disabilities.

### **Mentoring special youth populations.**

Britner P, Balcazar F, Blechman E, Blinn-Pike L, Larose S. Department of Human Development & Family Studies, University of Connecticut, U-2058, Storrs, CT 06269-2058 [Britner@uconn.edu](mailto:Britner@uconn.edu) Journal of Community Psychology, 34(6): 747-763.

ABSTRACT: Whereas mentoring programs are well received as support services, very little empirical research has been conducted to assess the effectiveness of these programs to meet the diverse needs of different special populations of youth. Potentially useful theoretical orientations (attachment, parental acceptance-rejection, social support, adult development, host provocation) and a sociomotivational model of mentoring are presented to complement Rhodes's (2002) model. Mentoring research literatures for five special populations of youth (abused and neglected youth, youth who have disabilities, pregnant and parenting adolescents, juvenile offenders, academically at-risk students) are critiqued. Systemic, longitudinal research must address the cooccurrence of risk factors, populations, and interventions. We conclude with specific recommendations for future research.

### **Mentors: paving the transition from school to adulthood for students with disabilities.**

Wilson J. American Rehabilitation, Autumn, 2003

The word transition announces a time of change, and change is often accompanied by growth, uncertainty and possibility.

The transition from K-12 education to the world of work or higher education is both a trying and exciting time for most young adults, but it can be particularly stressful for students with disabilities. While everyone can recall times when they encountered difficulties in school, many of those experienced by students with disabilities are unique and not completely addressed under the current systems of services to individuals with disabilities. For instance, students with disabilities do not always have access to necessary classroom materials and technology. At the same time, transition-age youth often struggle with social acceptance and negative stereotypes about their disabilities, frequently are unable to participate in extracurricular activities and are not always taught the disability-specific skills and techniques they need to succeed at school and life.

### **Partners for youth with disabilities.**

Snowden R. American Rehabilitation, Autumn, 2003

Partners for Youth with Disabilities (PYD) is a nonprofit organization committed to empowering youth with disabilities through connecting them with mentors and role models. For nearly 20 years, PYD has developed a wide range of mentoring programs, including Youth in Preparation for Independence, Making Healthy Connections, Young Entrepreneurs Project, Access to Theatre, and Partners On line. All of these programs connect youth with disabilities with individuals who serve as positive role models and who provide them with invaluable support, information and assistance with goal setting and career planning.

Studies demonstrate that youth with disabilities significantly benefit by participating in mentoring programs. This is especially true for students transitioning from school to

work. Fortunately, mentoring programs can easily be incorporated into the transition planning of students with disabilities when service providers have the right information.

**Two mentorship case studies of high school and university students with disabilities: milestones and lessons.**

Stumbo N, Blegen A, Lindahl-Lewis P. Journal of Rehabilitation, July-Sept, 2008  
As of 2003, over four million individuals aged 20 or under were experiencing a disability, representing approximately 15 percent of all same-aged individuals (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2003). This represents a slightly higher incidence of disability than the 12.6 percent of working-age adults reporting a disability in 2005 (StatsRRTC, 2005). However, of working-age adults with disabilities, only 38.1 percent reported working, with only 22.6 percent working full-time for the full year (StatsRRTC, 2005). Smith (2007) noted that persons with disabilities continue to experience notably lower rates of employment than persons without disabilities and that interventions are needed to impact these discrepancies.

Mentorships are one example of an intervention aimed at decreasing risk factors and increasing the likelihood of success for persons with disabilities. Mentorships for individuals with disabilities have been widely advocated, although not well-researched (Coombs-Richardson, 2002; Powers, Sowers, & Stevens, 1995; Snowden, 2003; Sword & Hill, 2003; Whelley, Radtke, Burgstahler, & Christ, 2003; Wilson, 2003). DuBois and Rhodes (2006), in establishing a national research agenda for youth mentoring, called for "best practice" program descriptions that produce positive outcomes. The purpose of this article is to describe two related, but independent mentorship programs for secondary and post-secondary students with disabilities. Descriptions on the recruitment, orientation, design, and evaluation of the two programs will be highlighted. Outcome data, where available, will be included.

**© 2008 American Association on Health & Disability**

American Association on Health and Disability (AAHD) provides the materials and links for general information, education and disease awareness purposes only. Although every effort is made to assure that information is accurate and current, knowledge in the field of disability is changing often, and all data is subject to change without notice. AAHD makes no representations or warranties and assumes no responsibility or liability as to the accuracy, completeness, reliability or usefulness of any information contained in this document. Neither AAHD nor any parties, who supply information to AAHD, make any warranty concerning the accuracy of any information in this document.

This publication was made possible, in part, by a grant from the Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (U59/CCU321860-04).