



DISCOVERY OPTIONS

What are ways to collect information about someone who needs a job?

Check off the different ways in which you chose to gain information about a jobseeker, and then describe the process you went through after each option.

One-on-one interview with the jobseeker. This process works best with people who are verbal, enjoy talking about themselves, and can clearly express thoughts. This process can also be used with someone who is nonverbal if picture cues or effective communication devices are available. Having a key stakeholder who understands the subtleties of his or her nonverbal cues and reactions may be helpful to have participate.

Observe in a group or classroom. This process is helpful to see how someone interacts with other people and authority figures, how she or he follows directions, focuses on tasks, deals with frustration and confusion, and contributes to the class or group as a whole. In terms of employment, this gives you insight into learning styles, social behavior, and information gathering which will tell you what types of work environments might be most suitable, how he or she could learn a new task on the job, and how he or she might interact with a supervisor.

File review. This method of gaining information allows you to see a person's history, understand medical needs, review behavior plans, see general testing scores, etc. This information alone is good background, but not all that useful in selling someone to an employer!

Observe on a job or doing job tasks. If a person has some sort of job experience – whether in-school, within an agency, or community volunteer work – it is important to observe how he or she functions, i.e. how tasks were learned and are completed, what happens during down-time, speed, accuracy, etc. It is also very important to observe how he or she fits into the environment to see if that work culture matches personality.

Interview professionals (aides, case managers, teachers, etc.) Those people who spend much time with a person have helpful information about consistency of behaviors, triggers of positive and negative behaviors, personality traits and quirks, and a general history. If you are just meeting a jobseeker or have not known him or her for very long, the behaviors may be different for you; it is important to know what occurs over time.

Interview family and friends. For the same reason you interview professionals, family and friends have even that much more information. Keep in mind during interviews of key stakeholders that you are recording PERSPECTIVES of facts and to always balance this information with your own actual observations and experiences.

Observe at home. People act differently in different environments. Get an idea of behavior trends at home, and it gives you insight into family dynamics that will be helpful later as you are working through job interviews and work schedules.

Standardized tests. This type of assessment can gain useful information, especially about career interests. Keep in mind that not everyone is actually successful with standardized test taking, and make sure you are aware of all the supports that need to be provided for someone – such as having questions and answers read or even rephrased for someone, using pictures instead of words, and separating the test out into sections over time.

Observe in the community. Again, people act differently in different environments – we all do! We act differently on a Saturday night out with friends than we do at work on Monday morning. Because the jobseeker will be finding a job out in the community, it is important to observe behaviors and skills that occur outside of school /agency and home. It is amazing what you will see people do out in the world that they wouldn't even attempt – whether it is because they don't need to or are not encouraged to – in the protected world of school, special education, and adult service agencies.)

Work simulations. Although it is often difficult for people with Intellectual Disabilities to transfer skills they learn in one environment to another, it is still helpful to get a basic skill baseline, even if in a simulated setting. If you are at least aware of what someone is capable of in one environment, you have a better chance of creating a different way for him or her to do a similar task on a real job.

Other. You may find other creative and interesting ways to gather information about a jobseeker not listed here already. Please describe what you've tried and how it worked here.
