Onboarding New Staff: A Holistic Approach to Training in Higher Education Disability Services

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Purdue University

We ask you to join us in creating a culture that reflects…

Access and Inclusion

and

Civility and Respect

…this week and in all aspects of our organization.

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Activity 1

- What was your onboarding experience like?
- How did your onboarding prepare you (or not) for real-world decision-making?
- How did you build confidence in your role?

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Purdue's Onboarding Material

- New Employee Checklist
- Pre-Boarding Tasks
- First Week Tasks
- Access Consultant Specific Training
- All of these training documents you are free to utilize
- AC Self-Guided Training
- Case Management Software (AIM) Tutorials
- Trainings that we created for Purdue

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Activity 2: Building Your Calendar

- Open the provided blank calendar
- Outline your current training schedule in general terms
- How much time is spent on training?
- How much time is spent

Sample Onboarding Schedule

Pre-Boarding (Before First Day):

- Welcome email with resources and schedule

- Access to essential policies and team overview

- Set up tech access (email, AIM, Teams)

Week 1: Foundations:

- Introduction to mission, values, and key contacts

- Overview of DRC operations and campus partners

- Assigned mentor or onboarding buddy

Weeks 2-4: Core Training and Shadowing:

- Shadow Access Consultant appointments

- Training modules: documentation, AIM, accommodations

- Review of legal foundations (ADA, Section 504)

Week 5 and Beyond:

- Staff presentation on a key learning area

- Deep dives into complex accommodations

- Self-paced readings and policy reflection

Purdue's Training Framework

- **Structured** onboarding with timelines and goals
- Training calendar with shadowing built into staff schedules
- Access to DRC Training Manual
- Interactive case studies and legal scenario discussions
- Daily Check-ins
- Ongoing weekly mentorship and check-ins

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Individualizing Training

- Start with a strengths-based conversation

- Assess experience level with disability services, legal framework, and case management

- Customize reading lists based on prior knowledge

- Adjust shadowing depth based on comfort with student interactions

- Set weekly learning goals tailored to consultant's background

- Use real-time feedback and reflective supervision

- Invite new staff to express training preferences and need

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Individualizing Training (2)

Expanded Tips for Individualization:

- Use a shared training tracker or checklist
  - o Save for future reference (OCR)
- Assign projects that align with staff interests
- Vary formats: readings, podcasts, recorded trainings, 1:1 conversations
- Build in flexibility to revisit or delay content

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The Role of Shadowing

Why Shadowing Matters:
- Observing appointments builds confidence and relationships with coworkers
- Allows new staff to see various communication styles
- Reinforces theoretical learning with practical exposure
- Encourages open dialogue and questions
- Helps with consistency across team
- Include feedback loop after observations

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Activity #3: Case Study

- Review a sample student case on the next slide
  - How would you explain your approach to a new professional?
  - As a new professional, what are the questions you immediately have?
  - How would you navigate an unexpected detail in the student interview?
  - How do you avoid leading questions?

Student Application

- Purdue Pete

- Diagnosis: ADHD, GAD

- Request: 200% Time on Exams, Distraction Reduced Environment, Private Room/Private Bath

- From the student application:

- When I am taking tests, my anxiety goes crazy. I have to reread questions and sometimes take time away. Living with others makes it hard to study because of my ADHD, so I need a private room.

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Tips for Training and Individualizing

- What We've Learned:
- Start small and scaffold training topics
- Build relationships alongside policies
- Document everything and use shared resources
- Include campus partners in training
- Encourage reflective practice
- Revisit and revise training based on feedback
- Normalize questions and mistakes early

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Onboarding Doesn't Stop

- Regular Professional Development Opportunities

- Accommodation Review Committee

- Business Meeting where policies and procedures are addressed

- Biweekly Professional development

- Campus partners, AHEAD webinars/mentorship, Tutorials
- Regular Notes Audits and Meeting Shadowing

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Small Office Considerations

- [AHEAD conferences](#) are key
- [Resources for New Professionals](#)
- [AHEAD Academy](#)
- [AHEAD Start Program](#)
- [State AHEAD Chapter](#)
- [Book Recommendation: *Disability Services in Higher Education: An Insider's Guide* By Behling et al.](#)

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Session Evaluation

tinyurl.com/AHEADFeedback

Your feedback helps shape future programming.

Thank you for attending!