2019 Online KT Conference: Innovative KT Strategies That Work

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Defining Key Concepts in Disability with Comics

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Context for Project

- Northeast ADA Center
- Conducting qualitative and quantitative research on implementation of Title I of the ADA in small business
The Problem...

- Qualitative inquiry revealed a problem.
- Small business did not know any of the terminology found in the ADA.
- You can’t ask about things without a common understanding.
What is a disability?

Small Companies and the ADA
I just read that the Americans with Disabilities Act applies to small companies. But, no one here uses a wheelchair or is blind...

The employment provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) apply to all businesses with fifteen or more employees.

Disability Under the ADA
Actually, 20% of the American population has a disability. Many disabilities you can’t even see. Conditions like hearing impairments, depression and cancer may be disabilities under the ADA.

Under the ADA, if an employee has an ongoing or serious medical/health condition that affects how their body works or the way they do their job, they might have a disability.

Covered Employees
These could all be disabilities under the ADA!!!

Huh...
Tom has a slipped disc, Silvia has low vision, and Mateo deals with anxiety...

In order to benefit from the protections of the ADA, an employee must disclose they have a disability to their employer.

The Solution

What is reasonable accommodation?

**Disability Disclosure**
- Silvia told me she’s having trouble reading small text on her computer.
- Silvia may have disclosed a disability. Let’s talk to her about how we can provide a reasonable accommodation.

**Reasonable Accommodation**
- What’s a reasonable accommodation? It sounds complicated...
- It’s not as hard as you think! We’ve already provided accommodations like special keyboards, flexible schedules, and time off for regular doctor appointments.

**Accommodation Process**
- Well, we do try to give all our employees what they need to do their best work.
- YES, WE DO! And, when a disability is involved we have a legal obligation under the ADA.
- Having a clear process in place can help make providing accommodations fair and equitable for all employees with or without a disability.

The Impact...

Table 1. Educating about Disability and the ADA through Comics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How helpful were these comics in explaining disability and reasonable accommodation under the ADA?</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not helpful at all</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly helpful</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat helpful</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>24.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very helpful</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>69.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary:
- 94.3% found the comics at least somewhat helpful in explaining disability and accommodation.

What’s Next…

- Dear ADA “teasers” with single panel lead in
- Comic micro-content to explore complex issues in the ADA
Disclaimer

The contents of this presentation were developed under grant number 90DPKT0001 from the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR). NIDILRR is a Center within the Administration for Community Living (ACL), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The contents of this presentation do not necessarily represent the policy of NIDILRR, ACL, HHS, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

Don’t forget to fill out the **evaluation form**!