



Employer Assistance and Resource
Network on Disability Inclusion

Creating Inclusive Higher Education Work Environments for People with Mental Health Disabilities

September 14, 2017



AskEARN.org

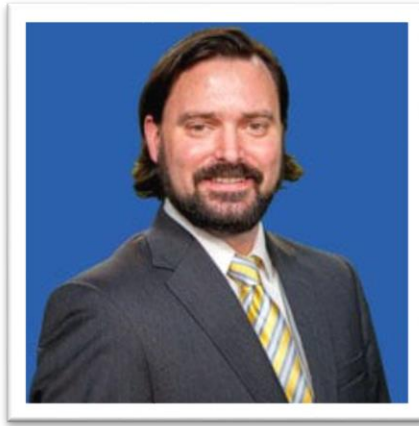
Creating Inclusive Higher Education Work Environments for People with Mental Health Disabilities



Nancy Aebersold

Founder and Executive Director
Higher Education Recruitment
Consortium (HERC)

Creating Inclusive Higher Education Work Environments for People with Mental Health Disabilities



Brett Sheats

National Project Director
Employer Assistance and Resource
Network on Disability Inclusion (EARN)

Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion (EARN)

- A no-cost resource for employers seeking to proactively recruit, hire, retain and advance qualified employees with disabilities
 - Access trainings, webinars and numerous publications
- Funded through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy
- Collaborative of multiple partners with expertise in technical assistance, training and research
- Visit website at <http://AskEARN.org>

Housekeeping

- For audio call: **415-655-0045**
 - Access code: **660 445 992#**
- Contact WebEx tech support at 1-866-229-3239
- Download slides at [AskEARN.org](https://www.AskEARN.org)
- An archived recording of the webinar will be posted to [AskEARN.org](https://www.AskEARN.org) within the week
- Submit questions via Q&A window or via [@AskEARN](https://twitter.com/AskEARN)
- Having trouble posting to the Q&A window? Email AskEARN@viscardicenter.org
- Tweet using [#AskEARN](https://twitter.com/AskEARN)
- Live captioning is located at the bottom right of the screen
- Receive 1.0 general recertification credit hours through the HR Certification Institute (HRCI) and the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) (via email following the event)

Audience Assessment Question



On a scale of one to five (1 = very little understanding and 5 = extensive understanding), how would you rate your knowledge and understanding of ways to make higher education work environments more inclusive of people with mental health disabilities?

Creating Inclusive Higher Education Work Environments for People with Mental Health Disabilities



Melanie Whetzel

Lead Consultant
Cognitive/Neurological Team
Job Accommodation Network (JAN)

Mental Health Accommodations



- Established in 1983 as a national, free service
- Specializes in job accommodations and the employment provisions of the ADA
- Assists with the interactive process
- Provides targeted technical assistance
- Provides comprehensive resources
- Maintains confidentiality
- Communicates via telephone, chat, text, TTY, relay, email, Skype and social networks
- Offers live and archived training
- Works as a partner in making model employers

Mental Health Accommodations

Disclosure



Why Disclose?

- To ask for job accommodations
- To receive benefits or privileges of employment
- To explain an unusual circumstance

Who to Disclose to?

Verbally or in writing, tell the...

- Employer
- Supervisor
- HR representative, or
- Other appropriate person

Performance, Conduct and the Timing of Disclosure



Confidentiality of Medical Information

Exceptions:

- Supervisors and managers
- First aid and safety personnel
- Government officials investigating compliance with the ADA and other federal and state laws
- Relevant information may be provided to state workers' compensation offices or "second injury" funds
- Relevant information may be provided to insurance companies

Mental Health Accommodations

Accommodation Example:

A college professor who had difficulty with concentration and focus. His employer provided him with the accommodation of rescheduling departmental meetings and classes he taught to after 11:00 am to allow uninterrupted morning hours for planning, studying, and administrative duties.



Mental Health Accommodations

Accommodation Example:

A newly hired counselor, who could perform the essential functions of the job, had difficulty during trainings due to short-term memory deficits associated with a mental health impairment. For example, she had difficulty moving through training modules at the scheduled pace. She was accommodated with extended training, a more relaxed schedule for completion of the training, extra time with the trainer, materials to take home to study, and an extended time frame for completion of each module.

Mental Health Accommodations

Accommodation Example:

A professor requested the accommodation of an office with windows because natural lighting is needed and helpful for her seasonal affective disorder. Since professors with more seniority were offered the offices with windows, JAN suggested the use of full-spectrum lighting that has nearly the same effect as natural lighting and can be found in task lighting, desk and floor lamps, light boxes and torchieres, as well as replacement bulbs for existing lighting.

Mental Health Accommodations

Accommodation Example:

A part-time professor with ADHD and anxiety was having difficulty planning new courses when the schedule changed quickly and he was required to do so under tight time constraints. He requested that he only be put on the new courses that were firmly scheduled ahead of time in order to give him time to prepare. If he were to teach courses that were suddenly added, he asked that those be ones he had previously taught and planned for.

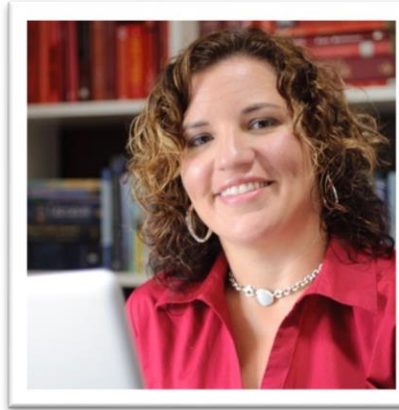
Mental Health Accommodations

Contact

- 1-800-526-7234 (voice) & 1-877-781-9403 (TTY)
- AskJAN.org & jan@askjan.org
- (304) 216-8189 via Text
- janconsultants via Skype



Creating Inclusive Higher Education Work Environments for People with Mental Health Disabilities



Kristen Abell

Web Manager in Strategic Marketing and Communications
University of Missouri-Kansas City
Co-founder of The Committed Project Organization

Kristen's Story: Living with Depression

- Every story is different – understanding a person's story will help you support them
- Don't rely on characterizations of mental illness
- People with mental illness don't control the illness – they maintain it

Kristen's Story: A Downward Slope

- Emotions associated with mental illness are hard to explain if you haven't experienced it
- We look to nonverbal cues and test the water before disclosing

Kristen's Story: Diagnosis

- Stigma prevents many people from ever seeking help for their illness
- Normalizing mental illness is important to help people understand that it's okay to ask for help

Kristen's Story: Living with Depression

- Maintenance looks different for everyone
- Mental illness is often lifelong
- Maintenance plans may change or need to change depending on the user and the elements involved

Mental Illness at Work

- Stigma may impact if someone discloses
- Stigma also impacts how people ask for help
- How is stigma visible in your workplace?

Generational Differences

- Different generations perceive stigma differently
- Younger generations may be more open to disclose
- Older generations may never disclose their illness

An Open-Minded Culture

- Develop a culture of open-mindedness
- Create psychological safety with vulnerability
- Normalize mental illness

Language Matters

- Recognize ways language can be harmful for those with mental illness
- Don't use mental illness terms as synonyms for things that are bad, absurd or ridiculous

Creating Inclusive Higher Education Work Environments for People with Mental Health Disabilities



Tom Ruggieri

Coordinator of Faculty Staff Assistance
Program (FSAP)
University of Maryland

Faculty Staff Assistance Program Services

- 10 free and confidential visits for assessment, referral & counseling
- Coaching and Consultations
- Mediation
- Emergency Loans
- Presentations
- Critical Incident Debriefings



Mental Health & Substance Use Disorders are Prevalent in the Workforce

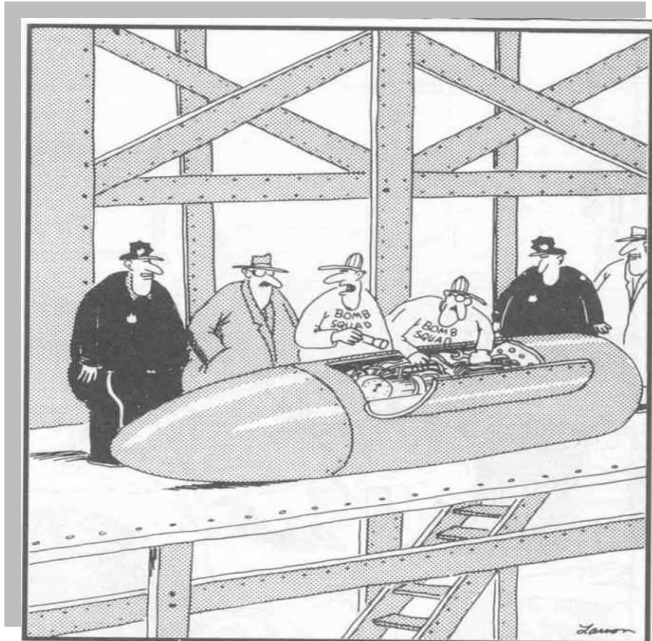
- 30-40% of U.S. population experience mental health and substance abuse disorders at some point in their lives, with about half (15-20%) requiring professional care each year¹
- Close to 10% of workers are classified as heavy alcohol users who drink large amounts of alcohol on a regular basis^{2,3}
- The general prevalence of illicit drug use among U.S. workers is 8%⁴
- There is also significant co-occurrence of mental disorders and substance disorders (up to 25%) and significant co-occurrence of mental and substance use disorders with other chronic medical conditions⁵

Workplace Conflict and Stress

Workers who report that they are stressed incur healthcare costs that are 46 percent higher than for non-stressed employees, according to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). And 60 to 90 percent of doctor visits are attributed to stress-related illnesses and symptoms.

Sources: NIOSH, American Academy of Family Physicians, APAAPA

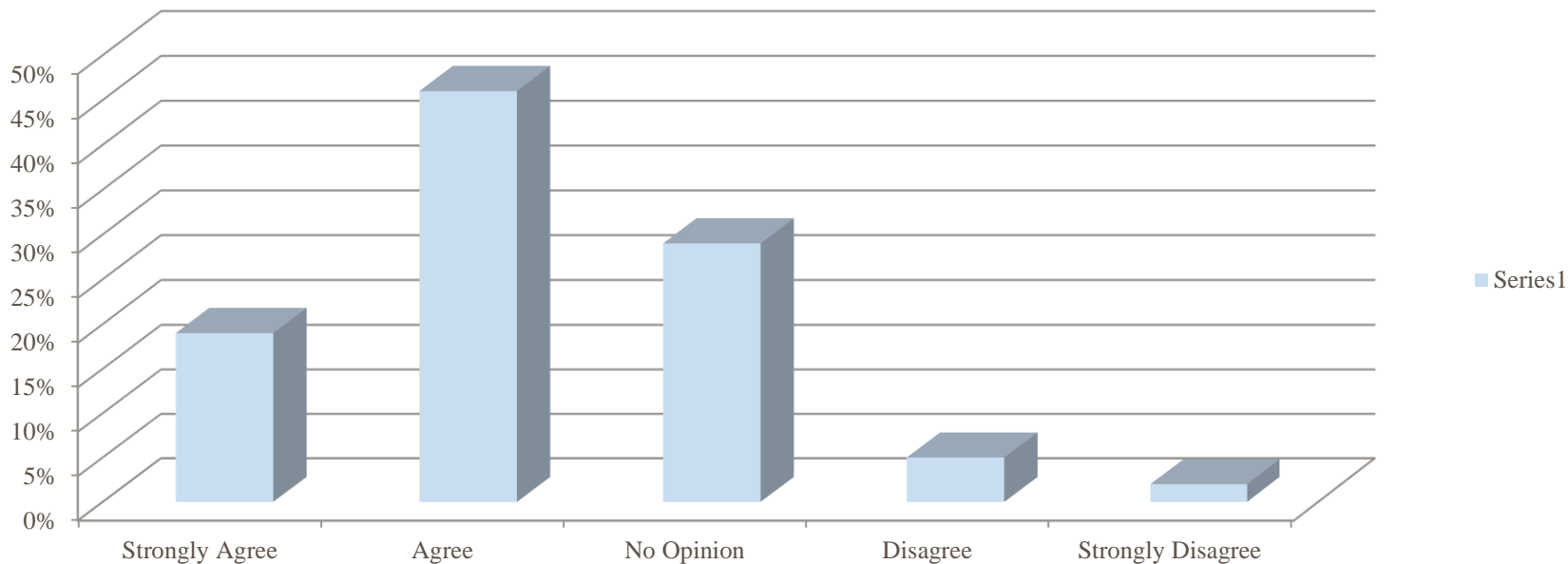
Personal Problems Do Show up at Work



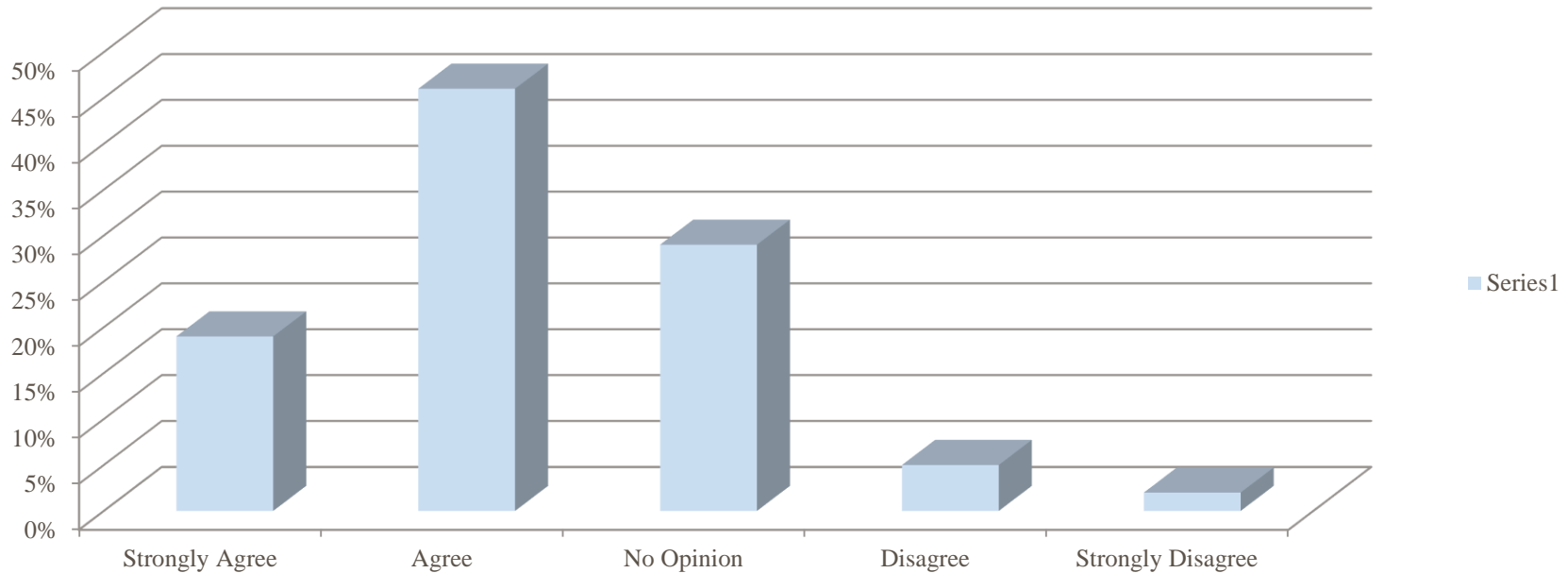
“Well, it’s a delicate situation sir...Sophisticated firing system, hair-trigger mechanisms, and Bob’s wife just left him last night, so you know his mind’s not into this.”

The Far Side....Gary Larson

64% of FSAP Participants Felt that Their Concerns Interfered with Work Performance



65% of FSAP Users Felt that Their Work Performance or Productivity Improved after Using FSAP



The Impact of Employee Assistance Services on Workplace Outcomes: Results of a Prospective, Quasi-Experimental Study

- Employees who received EAP counseling services demonstrated significant reductions in (1) work hours missed and (2) presenteeism at follow-up compared to a matched group of similar employees who did not receive EAP⁶
- EAPs are well positioned to provide this critical function because they have trained professionals deliver individualized behavioral health services with an underlying goal of improving work behaviors⁶
- Employers benefit from these services because EAPs tackle some of the key factors that are linked to low productivity, such as depression, anxiety, stress and alcohol abuse (Ames & Bennett, 2011; Lerner & Henke, 2008)

Sources

- [1] U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. (1999). Mental health: A report of the Surgeon General - Executive summary. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Mental Health Services, National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Mental Health. Available from: www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/mentalhealth/toc.html
- [2] Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration. (2005). National survey on drug use and health, 2003. Rockville, MD: Author. Available from: <http://oas.samhsa.gov/mh.cfm#Tables>
- [3] Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2007). National survey on drug use and health 2005 and 2006: Table 5.8A. Rockville, MD: Author. Available from: <http://oas.samhsa.gov/nsduh/2k6nsduh/tabs/Sect5peTabs1to13.pdf>
- [4] Larson, S. L., Eyerman, J., Foster, M. S., & Gfroerer, J. C. (2007). Worker substance use and workplace policies and programs (DHHS Publication No. SMA 07-4273, Analytic Series A-29). Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Office of Applied Studies. Available from: www.oas.samhsa.gov/work2k7/work.htm
- [5] Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2007). National survey on drug use and health 2005 and 2006: Table 5.8A. Rockville, MD: Author. Available from: <http://oas.samhsa.gov/nsduh/2k6nsduh/tabs/Sect5peTabs1to13.pdf>
- [6] Journal of Occupational Health Psychology. The Impact of Employee Assistance Services on Workplace Outcomes: Results of a Prospective, Quasi-Experimental Study. Melissa K. Richmond, Fred C. Pampel, Randi C. Wood, and Ana P. Nunes Online First Publication, December 14, 2015. Available from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/ocp0000018>

Contact Information

- **Nancy Aebersold**
HERC Founder and Executive Director
HERC
Email: nancy@hercjobs.org
- **Brett Sheats**
National Project Director
EARN
Email: BSheats@ViscardiCenter.org
- **Melanie Whetzel**
Lead Consultant, Cognitive/Neurological Team
JAN
Email: Whetzel@jan.wvu.edu
- **Kristen Abell**
Web Manager in Strategic Marketing and Communications at the University of Missouri Kansas City and Co-founder of The Committed Project
Email: kristen@thecommittedproject.org
- **Tom Ruggieri**
Coordinator of University of Maryland Faculty Staff Assistance Program (FSAP)
Email: ruggieri@umd.edu

Resources

- **Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion (EARN):** <http://www.AskEARN.org>
- **Job Accommodation Network (JAN):** <https://askjan.org/>
- **U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP):** <https://www.DOL.gov/ODEP>
- **Higher Education Recruitment Consortium (HERC):** <https://www.hercjobs.org/index.html>
- **The Committed Project:** <http://thecommittedproject.org/>
- **University of Maryland Faculty Staff Assistance Program (FSAP):** <http://www.health.umd.edu/fsap>

Audience Questions



Takeaways

- For Employees: Don't wait too long before disclosing a disability, particularly if performance or conduct issues are involved
- For Employers: Don't wait too long before discussing performance or conduct issues in order to give employees the opportunity as soon as possible, to address the concerns
- Define mental health days and expectations
- Try picturing a mental health disability as a physical disability.
- It is a safe estimate that at least 50% of American workers show up for work every day with a decreased ability to effectively perform their jobs, either due to a mental health, substance abuse or other personal stressor or conflict
- EAPs are ideally suited to provide support to these employees in an effort to assess, refer, monitor and treat these issues. The approach is somewhat different from an outside clinician in that the primary focus is improved job performance AND there is an awareness of the work culture and how that might impact diagnoses and recovery

Audience Assessment Question



On a scale of one to five (1 = very little understanding and 5 = extensive understanding), how would you rate your knowledge and understanding of ways to make higher education work environments more inclusive of people with mental health disabilities?

Thank You!

Visit us at [AskEARN.org](https://www.AskEARN.org)



Employer Assistance and Resource
Network on Disability Inclusion

[AskEARN.org](https://www.AskEARN.org)

42