



Compensatory Strategies

Success at the Workplace

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Objectives

- Define compensatory strategy
- When strategies are needed
- Identifying simple and inclusive tools
- Ensure there is effective follow-up

VR Glossary – Key Terms

Compensatory Techniques are strategies used to help people perform tasks in an alternative manner or by using adaptive aids so that they can be more independent. Compensatory techniques also help people learn new tasks.

Why?

*Perform assigned job tasks
with increased independence.*





What percentage of the workforce uses compensatory strategies to be successful?

- a) About 3% of the workforce that are individuals with the most severe disabilities use compensatory strategies.
- b) About 17.5% of the workforce that has an disclosed disability will likely use a compensatory strategy.
- c) Everyone uses compensatory strategies.

*“Don’t use a lot
where a little will do.”*

Proverb



Common Training Strategies

1. Natural Cues
2. Prompts
 - a. Direct Verbal Prompts
 - b. Indirect Verbal Prompts
 - c. Non-Verbal Prompts
3. Modeling
4. Physical Assistance
5. Reinforcement
6. Self-instruction techniques

Natural Cues

- Movement in the workplace:
 - Buzzers/alarms/switches
 - Other workers' movement; routines
 - Change in machinery operation
- Supervisor & coworker communication tools
 - Verbal
 - Email
 - Posted information or verbal announcements
- Personal calendar with reminders
 - Electronic or smart phone

Verbal Prompts

- Spoken or signed instruction
- Useful before, during and after task is demonstrated
- Helpful for teaching order or discrimination tasks
- Not manipulation skills (requires practice)
- Avoid information overload - watch pace
- Caution: employee may attend to trainer instead of task

Indirect Verbal Prompt

Cue	Meaning
"Next"	What's next in the sequence, or move on to the next one.
"Time"	Check your time -are you on schedule?
"Again" or "Repeat"	Repeat the same action

Nonverbal Prompts & Gestures

- Gestures such as pointing and mimicking a motion used in a job task *-not appropriate* if consumer is visually impaired
- Minimizes employee distraction from task
- Helpful if there are language barriers
- Organize the workspace materials or equipment in a manner that the workflow presents itself without any other prompt.

Nonverbal Prompts & Gestures

Cue	Meaning
Point to time clock	Punch in or out
Tap wrist watch	Stay on time, break time or finish up
Touch safety glasses or point to eyes	Put on safety glasses
Point to object & shake head "no"	Not this one, leave this alone

Modeling

- A natural teaching approach that simulates the activity
- Evokes a mimic response
- Combines demonstration by trainer with simultaneous performance by the employee
- Trainer shows pace and complex manipulations
- Maintains productivity
- *The person demonstrating the task must provide accurate information*

Side-by-Side Modeling

- More difficult for trainer to catch errors
- Not as effective for employees who need close attention
- Caution trainer is not considered an ongoing support for production
- Consider a coworker as the 'model' for the employee so that you can coach from a training perspective

Physical Assistance

- Touching or physically guiding the employee through some or all steps in the task cycle
- Most effective on manipulation steps and tasks
- Partial Assist
- Hand-over-hand
- Most intrusive of the strategies

Reinforcement

- Personal
- Social reward
- Recognition that the employee recognizes as positive
- Workplace positive & negative reinforcements
- Paycheck

Self Management

Why Teach Self-management?

- Assist the person to respond appropriately and independently to changing circumstances in their job.
- Provide tools and insight to assist the person to manage their skill instruction and behavior.

Self Management

- Individualized approach where the worker begins to manage their own behavior. This involves using cues and techniques the worker enjoys and can manage.
- Unobtrusive & Personal
- Flow chart, picture booklet, memory notebook, verbal labels, audio

- Personal preparation
- Adaptions or modifications
 - To the workplace
 - The job task
 - Or, a part of the job process
- Strategy to learn a new task or gain a new skill
- Increase the person's control of the job task



I. Personal Preparation

- Personal care and health
- Fatigue management
- Work awareness & hardening
- Balance the workload – plan ahead
- Self-management strategies:
 - using personal planners
 - plan for routine breaks
- Know personal “best” for when certain tasks are scheduled
- Look at the whole week

Ideas to help Sally?

List your ideas into
the 'Question' box.



Example 1 – Personal preparation

Sally survived a traumatic brain injury and progressed well through rehabilitation. She got a job as an office assistant, doing many of the tasks she performed in her previous job. As the week progresses, she often gets severe headaches and feels clumsy or irritable. She frequently asks for more breaks, especially toward the end of the week. While it is clear that Sally is capable of completing the work tasks, her supervisor feels that other staff have to take up the slack when Sally is unable to perform her job.

II. Adaptions at the Workplace

- Making adjustments to the premises
- Acquiring or modifying equipment
- Providing a support worker
- Allowing the worker with a disability to be absent during work hours for assessment or treatment.
- Reallocating some of the worker's duties to another person
- Altering the worker's work hours
- Assigning the worker to a different place of work.

Your strategies to assist Demetri?

List your strategies into the 'Question' box.



Example 2 – Workplace adaptations

Demetri works part-time at a novelty factory, where he assembles product orders for shipping. He was recently offered a full-time position with benefits, but will require him to navigate to three or four different locations each day throughout the plant to complete different work orders. Demetri, who has a developmental disability on the autism spectrum, does not believe he will be able to find where he needs to go or how he will remember his job once he gets there. One of the locations has bright florescent lighting and shiny surfaces for the packaging area, an environment that could cause Demetri to get headaches and sometimes nauseated.

III. The Job Task & Systematic Instruction

A Task Analysis breaks the job task down into steps and becomes the basis for systematic training.

- Consistent sequence of steps
- Allows multiple trainers
- Identifies natural cues
- Accurate assessment

Components of a Task Analysis

- Identify the setting, materials & needed supplies
- Observe task being performed
- Perform the task
- List action steps (must result in observable behavior & visible change)
- Fine tune & match to learning style
- Validate with supervisor (if not already involved)
- Identify natural cues for each step
- Consider efficiency & eliminate need for judgment

How can you assist Angel and the employer?

List your suggestions into the 'Question' box.



Example 3 – Completing Job Tasks

Angel is capable of performing a variety of tasks on a daily basis in her position as a lobby attendant at a popular franchise restaurant. After she learned how to perform her job with the assistance of a co-worker mentor, she often had difficulty remembering to complete all necessary job duties. This was especially evident during the restaurant's busiest times, when Angel would forget to do several crucial tasks or leave tasks incomplete. Her supervisor provided her with a company checklist of job duties for her position. Co-workers would sometimes prompt her. However, the employee could not read the checklist, and when co-workers were busy they were not available to prompt the employee to do the forgotten task, or assist to complete a task.

IV. Job Design – Restructuring

Job restructuring as a form of reasonable accommodation may involve reallocating or redistributing the marginal functions of a job.

Job restructuring frequently is accomplished by exchanging marginal functions of a job that cannot be performed by a person with a disability for marginal job functions performed by other employees.

An employee must be able to perform the essential functions of the job, but where it is necessary to remove certain non-essential tasks from an employee's work requirements, this can be done.

The agency is not required to reallocate essential job functions.

IV. Job Design – Restructuring

An agency has two data processing clerks. Typing on the computer is an essential function, using the phone is a marginal one. If a qualified data processing clerk had a speech impairment, it would be reasonable to assign the function of using the phone to the employee without a speech impairment in exchange for doing that employee's filing.

IV. Job Design - Restructuring

Job restructuring as a form of facilitating and negotiating with an employer may reallocate job tasks that match the supported employees skills and abilities.

- Strategies to increase social interaction with coworkers or customers
- Identify new or emerging skills to increase workplace competency
- Add job tasks, i.e. answering the phone, delivering items to other staff, making an additional mail run

What solutions can we offer to the employer to assist Jordan to increase social interactions?

List your solutions into the 'Question' box.



Example IV – Restructure Solutions

Jordan arrives 1-hour before the bakery/deli opens to roll silverware, prepare tables and clean the restrooms. When customers begin to arrive, Jordan goes to the kitchen to wash dishes that have accumulated throughout the morning. He is able to perform his job, but states that he would like to work where he can meet more people.

V. Modification of Policies

- Change of a workplace policy that prohibits something an employee with a disability needs to do their job (e.g., allowing a person with a disability to be accompanied by a service animal, allowing food at the workstation of a person with diabetes, allowing personal items at the desk of a person with a psychiatric disability);
- Development of an emergency evacuation procedure to provide effective egress for employees with difficulty in mobility in case of emergency; or
- Provision of accessible parking for an employee with a qualified parking permit designated for persons with disabilities.

How would you support Helena's workplace needs?

List your support ideas into the 'Question' box.



V. Policy Modifications

Helena's learned to use her smart phone as an alarm for her daily school schedule. She also used the map to show where she was and had pin drops to places that she needed to navigate. While she enjoyed listening to music and calling friends, her smart phone was her daily reminder that kept her confident that she would always be on-time (a very important thing for Helena).

She has an opportunity to get a job at the local Convention Center in hospitality. However, like many employers, the job does not allow employees to keep smart phones while working.

Effective Follow-up and Sustainability

- Length of time a strategy is needed
- Teaching the person to create their own
- Enlisting employer and coworker
- Consulting and supporting the family or residential staff to maintain equipment
- Find self-advocacy or community groups that focus on retaining employment and mutual supports.

Resources

Institute for Community Inclusion

<http://www.communityinclusion.org>

WorkSupport

<http://www.worksupport.com>

Job Accommodation Network

<https://askjan.org>