

“Soft steps forward”

The importance of soft skills in obtaining work

Objectives

The following questions are tackled throughout this workshop:

What is the reality? An example of soft skills in practice and its meaning.

What are the soft skills that people most commonly lack, why is this and how does it affect their chances of getting employment?

What are the soft skills that a boss expects and employee to have?

What are the creative or innovative ways that participants know about or use to support people to develop their soft skills?

Progress

An introduction is given by Jos Wouters. (Gebruikersoverleg Handicap, Chronische Ziekte en Arbeid).

- Seeing the advantages of your disability and offer this to employers: diversity makes an organisation or enterprise stronger.
- Social network is important (support of family, friends, ...)
- Still a lot of prejudices towards people with disabilities, they don't get a chance, they are locked out of society. But they have to realize that their own attitude plays a big role in this.
- People want to be involved in communication, so don't talk about them, but with them.

The essence of his story was: from helping people to supporting people!

From this story, we learn that self esteem and self confidence is an important factor in employability. This is a key-factor in working on soft skills.

The participants are asked to tell the group the first thing that comes to mind, when they hear about 'soft skills': Attitude, motivation, daily skills, communication skills, personal appearance, self confidence / self esteem, ...

Groups are formed to discuss a case. Each case is a profile with a view on the human connections, the soft skills and the obstacles in the way of employment or employability.

Questions:

- What detains the person to work,
- What skills does he/she need?
- Which approach would you use?
- What would you emphasize?
- What would you not focus on?

For example: Steven is a carpenter, to cope with his personal problems he uses drugs. Sarah is a single mum with a lot of debts. She wants to work but she has no diploma. John had worked for over 25 years for the same employer and now he's unemployed. He feels useless and old.

Summary of the workshop

When you are unemployed, it's important to get the support that you need. We have to support people in getting their life back on the rails. That's why in SUCCES we want to develop a "10 steps to work guide". It's a challenge to look to people as individuals and not as stereotypes. A multidisciplinary approach is necessary. Old and young people experience obstacles in their life. Soft skills are essential, they are key elements for employer and employee.