

A Code of Ethics for Professionals in Supported Employment

The European Union of Supported Employment has developed a Code of Ethics that outlines principles and ethical commitments that demonstrate the competence and responsibilities required of professionals delivering supported employment. These principles should provide guidance to those working in this area and could also be used as guidelines for self-assessment and as a quality improvement tool. This Code of Ethics demonstrates the values underpinning supported employment, upon which professionals develop their everyday practice. The Code is intended to provide both general principles and guidelines to cover professional situations and activities when delivering supported employment services.

The Values and Principles underpinning Supported Employment are completely consistent with the concepts of empowerment, social inclusion, dignity and respect for individuals.

VALUES

In the framework of Supported Employment those concepts can be further defined by the following values and principles that are present at all supported employment stages and activities:

Individuality

Supported Employment regards each individual as unique, with his / her own interests, preferences, conditions and life history.

Respect

Supported Employment activities are always age appropriate, dignifying and enhancing.

Self-determination

Supported Employment assists individuals to improve their interests and preferences, express their choices, and define their employment / life plan according to personal and contextual conditions. It promotes the principles of self-advocacy by service users.

Informed choice

Supported Employment assists individuals to understand their opportunities fully so they can choose consistently within their preferences and with an understanding of the consequences of their choices.

Empowerment

Supported Employment assists individuals to make decisions on their lifestyle and participation in society. Individuals are centrally involved in the planning, evaluation and development of

services.

Confidentiality

The Supported Employment service provider considers information given by individuals to them as confidential. The service user has access to his/her personal information gathered by the provider and any disclosure is at the discretion of and with the agreement of the individual.

Flexibility

Staff and organisational structures are able to change according to the needs of service users. Services are flexible and responsive to the needs of individuals and can be adapted to meet specific requirements.

Accessibility

Supported Employment services, facilities and information are fully accessible to all people with disabilities.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Professional Competence

Supported Employment professionals should maintain the highest levels of competence in their work, and should recognise the need to update their knowledge in the key areas of Supported Employment. They should be responsible for their own continuing professional development and consult with other professionals to exchange information, share good practice and develop professional and technical expertise.

Integrity

Supported Employment professionals must be honest, fair and respectful of others in their professional activities. Supported Employment professionals should conduct their activities in ways that inspire trust and confidence.

Opportunity and Equality

Supported Employment professionals must respect the rights, dignity and worth of all stakeholders. They must not discriminate in any way on the grounds of gender, age, religion, race, ethnicity, political opinion, disability, sexual orientation, health condition, dependence or social status.

They should be sensitive and responsive to cultural and individual differences and needs and provide equality of opportunity and of outcomes for all individuals.

Social Responsibility

Supported Employment professionals should be aware of the impact they have on people's lifestyle and on the communities in which they live and work, they should accept the responsibility to contribute to social inclusion through employment.

Confidentiality

Supported Employment professionals have an obligation to ensure that confidential / sensitive information is protected. Agreement must be sought and gained from the individual regarding matters relating to disclosure and a professional relationship with individuals must be maintained at all times.

Empowerment and Self-advocacy

Supported Employment professionals have an obligation to actively promote the maximum participation, decision-making and autonomy of individuals within the supported employment process.

Competence - General Awareness

Professionals should be able to demonstrate knowledge and awareness in general of supported employment activities including:

- Factors that lead to the development of supported employment and the differences between supported employment and segregated, and other services.
- The definition and characteristics of supported employment and its underpinning values.
- Informed choice, self-determination and active participation throughout the supported employment process.
- The roles and responsibilities of all key stakeholders in delivering and facilitating supported employment opportunities.
- The rights and responsibilities of individuals in supported employment, identifying best practice in the supported employment process.

Profiling

Supported employment practitioners should have the ability to undertake vocational profiling, assessment and career planning in accordance with the individual's interests including:

- Delivering effective and meaningful vocational assessment in partnership with individuals.
- Adopting a Person Centred Planning approach to all parts of the supported employment process including career profile development.

- Considering the facilitation of on the job assessments, work experience placements, job tasters and job shadowing.
- Assisting individuals to develop personal career goals and meaningful and realistic career plans to maximise their potential.
- Developing partnerships with appropriate agencies, organisations and networks to enable career advancement.

Job Finding and Marketing

Professionals must be able to deliver a wide range of effective job finding and marketing techniques within the supported employment process including:

- Creating effective marketing strategies for supported employment.
- Producing marketing materials suitable for employers.
- Recognising and using both formal and informal job finding methods.
- Involving the job seeker in the job search process.
- Understanding the local labour market and workplace cultures.
- Identifying the needs of employers.
- Conducting their contact with employers in a professional and business like manner.
- Assisting individuals to compete in the open labour market promoting their strengths, skills and abilities
- Assisting with the negotiation of terms, conditions and contracts of employment in accordance with relevant legislation.
- Knowing about and understanding relevant legislation that impacts upon employment issues

On and Off the Job Training and Supports

Supported employment professionals should be able to provide support in and away from the workplace adopting a range of activities including:

- Identifying and addressing the support needs of individuals in the workplace.
- Job analysing and identifying methods of establishing natural supports within the work

place.

- Developing workplace supports and identifying and addressing the support needs of employers and co-workers.
- Delivering a range of On and Off the Job support techniques.
- Providing advice and support regarding workplace aids, adaptations and job ergonomics to both employers and individuals.
- Assisting the individual to recognise and adopt the social behaviour and culture of the workplace.
- Maximising job performance and social inclusion.

Ongoing Supports

Professionals should be able to provide or identify resources to ensure the long term support of individuals in the workplace, if required, including:

- Identifying sources and funding for long-term supports.
- Completing a written agreement with both employers and individuals regarding support services to be delivered.
- Evaluating and reviewing the quality and relevance of services with both individuals and employers.
- Establishing a support network to assist the individual with any personal needs concerning employment.

Managing Welfare Benefits

Supported Employment professionals should be able to provide or access accurate and confidential advice and guidance relating to relevant welfare benefits and financial issues including:

- Informing individuals of work benefits and the financial implications of their decisions.
- Assisting individuals to obtain welfare benefit calculations to enable them to make informed choices.
- Maintaining a working knowledge of current welfare benefit rules.
- Networking with organisations which specialise in the delivery of welfare benefit information and advice.

Organisational Awareness

Professionals should be aware of the mission, role, objectives and activities of their organisation in relation to:

- Understanding their role and responsibilities within the organisation.
- Acknowledging the boundaries, limits and role of their organisation in relation to supported employment activities.
- Working as a member of a team to achieve organisational objectives.
- Contributing to system change within communities.
- Commitment to excellence.