Working with W-2 Participants with Learning Disabilities

Expected Outcome:
Provides W-2 FEPs and Case Managers with practical strategies and techniques for working effectively with W-2 applicants/participants living with learning disabilities as they move toward economic stability.

Objectives:
Upon completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Describe how learning disabilities may affect job search and retention
- Cite laws and W-2 program policies that relate to providing accommodations and services for individuals with learning disabilities
- Use informal and formal assessment results to determine reasonable accommodations based on the W-2 participant’s learning disability needs, allowing him/her to participate in the W-2 program and in the local labor market
- Identify resources for working with W-2 participants with learning disabilities
- Review, assess, and implement strategies for appropriate engagement of W-2 participants with learning disabilities for their entry/reentry into the workforce
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W-2 Contact Information

Questions regarding this training material should be directed via your local agency process to the Partner Training Team,
Email: PTTTrainingSupp@wisconsin.gov
A contact person is available to answer e-mailed questions related to this training material, assist you in completing any activity that you are having difficulty with, and/or provide explanation of anything else about this training material.

Questions regarding W-2 production cases and systems should be directed via your local agency process to the W-2 Help Desk at:
Email: DCFW2CARESHD@wisconsin.gov
Telephone: (608) 422-7900.
W-2 Policy questions should be directed to your Regional Office staff.

DCF is an equal opportunity employer and service provider. If you have a disability and need information in an alternate format, or need it translated to another language, please contact (608) 535-3665 or the Wisconsin Relay Service (WRS) – 711.

For civil rights questions call (608) 422-6889 or the Wisconsin Relay Service (WRS) – 711.
Introduction

The focus of the W-2 program is to assist applicants/participants as they move toward economic stability. This focus is not only on the perceived "easy to place" participant, but also on those individuals living with chronic medical issues, mental illness, and learning disabilities. Every eligible individual must have equal access to the employment services and supports provided through the W-2 program.

This course will look at how learning disabilities specifically can affect the participant's engagement in W-2 activities (e.g., education, training, and work experience), as well as in job search and the subsequent job retention, and provide strategies and techniques to work more effectively in addressing these challenges.

When you read the prerequisite to this course, “An Introduction to Learning Disabilities,” you received general information regarding the causes, symptoms, and definitions of selected learning disabilities (LD). Let’s see what you recall from that brief introduction and what you might already know about LD – don’t worry, this is not a test!
Check What You Know about Learning Disabilities

1. Individuals with LD usually have at least average intelligence.  
   True or False

2. Individuals with LD show low, but consistent, performance.  
   True or False

3. Individuals with LD often have sensory processing problems.  
   True or False

4. Individuals with LD often are associated with minimal brain dysfunction.  
   True or False

5. An individual with LD can have a family history of LD.  
   True or False

6. LD is seen more often in males than in females.  
   True or False

7. LD tends to resolve itself and generally disappears in adolescence.  
   True or False

8. LD is not confined to academic deficits.  
   True or False

9. An estimated 50%-80% of individuals in adult education and literacy programs have LD.  
   True or False

10. Individuals with LD comprise 30% of the general population.  
    True or False

11. An individual can have a diagnosis of LD and not be disabled.  
    True or False

12. Individuals with LD have more emotional disturbance than individuals without LD.  
    True or False

13. Individuals with LD also can have a coexisting ADHD.  
    True or False

14. LD can be determined using a recognized screening tool.  
    True or False

15. Individuals with LD should not be told they have a learning disability.  
    True or False

16. Individuals with LD are guaranteed protection under the law.  
    True or False

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1 This true/false exercise was adapted from a quiz developed by Dr. James Koller, co-director of the Center for the Advancement of Mental Health Practices in the Schools, University of Missouri – Columbia, a nationally recognized authority on learning disabilities.
Learning Disabilities

“…[L]earning disabilities are disorders that affect the ability to understand or use spoken or written language, do mathematical calculations, coordinate movements, or direct attention. Although learning disabilities occur in very young children, the disorders are usually not recognized until the child reaches school age. Learning disabilities are a lifelong condition; they are not outgrown or cured, though many people develop coping techniques through special education, tutoring, medication, therapy, personal development, or adaptation of learning skills.”

Video Reflections

1. What are some of the words and phrases used by the individuals with LD to describe what it is like having a learning disability?

2. What advice did the employment specialist offer for working with individuals with LD?

3. Learning disabilities may occur in one or more of the stages of learning:
   I________, P______________, and O__________

4. Individuals with learning disabilities who have auditory strengths will benefit from ___________ and ______

5. Individuals with learning disabilities who have kinesthetic strengths benefit from________________, ________________ and ________________.

6. Individuals with learning disabilities who have visual strengths benefit from___________________ and __________________.

Learning Disabilities: Learning from the Source is the award-winning video produced by Leaping Media and the Instructional Broadcast Center of the Seattle Public Schools in collaboration with the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County. For further information, see:


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Dyslexia

*Encoding and Decoding: A Learning Disability’s Potential Impact on Employment*

**Encoding Issues:** Difficulty distinguishing different sounds *within* words, and then having difficulty finding the appropriate letters or letter combinations to represent those sounds.

**Decoding Issues:** Analyzing and interpreting or “making sense” of what has been read – even after a word or words have been *decoded*, the result may not be retained.

How might encoding and decoding learning disabilities impact a participant’s ability to:

- Complete a job application?

- Interview for a position?

List other aspects of job search or job performance that may be affected by encoding or decoding challenges.

How could W-2 agencies or staff assist applicants/participants in meeting some of these challenges?
Reading Comprehension

Comprehension Exercise:
Read the following paragraph:
"The creation of hierarchies can result in improved surveillance and control of participants up to a point, but if extraordinary demands are required for secrecy or loyalty, formal hierarchical surveillance may have to be supplemented or replaced by ‘clan’ systems relying on more diffuse, internalized controls."  

What coping strategies might you develop if everything you read held the same amount of meaning on first reading?

How might it feel to have a problem with reading comprehension, knowing you must understand what you read in order to get services?

How might reading comprehension problems affect an applicant/participant’s relationship with the FEP, other agency staff, or an employer?

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Associative and Cognitive Tasks

What tasks are associative for you?

How might a person who handles information cognitively appear to others?

How might W-2 workers assist participants who handle information cognitively?

What kinds of entry level positions require performing both cognitive and associative tasks?
Reading as a Cognitive Task

To some degree, most of us find reading an associative task. It does not require intense, uninterrupted concentration. We can read our smartphones on the bus. We read a novel while we listen to music on our ear buds. For someone with a learning disability, reading is an extremely demanding cognitive task. You can perceive how hard a dyslexic reader works to read each individual word in the uneven pace, the uncertainty and flat tone of voice they use as they read aloud.

Here you can see images based on MRI scans, showing which part of the brain is working hardest when reading. In the brain of the average reader on the left, you see that three parts of the brain are working together at the same time to turn the printed symbols of the alphabet into the sounds they stand for, then turning the sounds into words and the words into meaning. In the dyslexic brain, only the front part of the brain is actively working.

The next activity asks you to take the place of a person for whom reading is a demanding, cognitive activity. We made the passage harder by adding the kinds of problems that some dyslexics appear to have. Nobody looks at a page of print and sees the scrambled mess you will find on the next page. Dyslexic readers, though, do sometimes experience one or more of the kinds of problems described below.

1. Lowercase ‘b, d, p’ and ‘q’ are interchangeable. The word that looks like pop could be bod or pod.
2. Words jump up and drop down out of their original lines. If you don’t see a word that makes sense, look up or down a line to see if it has hopped.
3. Reversals happen. STOP → SPOT, RATS → STAR, and so on. And, finally,
4. Words jam into each other, starting and stopping in odd places.

Now we will try it out for ourselves. Let’s try reading aloud from the next page. The purpose of this activity is to look at the experience of reading from a dyslexic person’s point of view. Imagine how hard it might be to get and retain meaning from a passage that takes so much work to decode.

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4 The image is from the Dyslexia Foundation of New Zealand: http://www.4d.org.nz/edge/key_extract10.html
Scrambled Print Activity

“Rose and Her Son Ted”

Dan T
Rose on, Ted, like to read. So Re was wanted to yub T a book for his birth he goes to the bookstore.

Rose asks the store clerk, “What do you buy for my son?”

The clerk says, “Kool fro dooks with bright pictures. Look for what only few words a book out our each Cho osedooks ad thingsy likes.”

Rose replies, “Ted likes strucks.”

Roes finds a lube and red dook whit lost of turks init. It has few ill wodrs no the gapes. “Ted likes this book,” Rose thinks. She busy book the fro him.

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5 Story from http://resources.marshalladulteducation.org/rs/l07/ted_timed1.htm
Dysnomia

Dysnomia is the difficulty in remembering names or recalling appropriate words to use in a given context.

Individuals with dysnomia struggle to name things. They know what they want to say, but cannot come up with the names of words or actions. They may talk haltingly, as the effort to speak is cognitive; that is, it takes a great deal of conscious effort, not associative, as it is for most people.

What did you notice about the second story?

How do you think workers could be most helpful in talking with participants with dysnomia?

What do you think workers should avoid doing that might intensify an applicant/participant's difficulties?

How might dysnomia impact an applicant/participant's ability to work with a FEP on developing an employability plan?
Sequencing Problems

New name and phone number

Write your new name here: Write your new phone number here:

What made this task particularly difficult?

Sequencing Tasks: Carrying Out Tasks in Their Necessary Order

Individuals unable to sequence tasks have difficulty retaining the proper order in which to carry out tasks. Receiving instructions on the correct order to do something has little meaning or quickly becomes confusing. Steps are performed in the wrong order or are skipped entirely, or these individuals may withdraw completely.

How might sequencing difficulties affect an applicant/participant’s contact with you?

What types of everyday events require sequencing? Employment-related events?

How might sequencing difficulties affect an applicant/participant’s employment, e.g., job search, job readiness activities, job performance?
**Dysgraphia**

**Difficulty in Producing Legible Handwriting**

**Nondominant Hand Exercise**

Complete tasks 1 and 2 with your nondominant hand.

1. Write the alphabet in manuscript (printed) as fast as you can. You have 2 minutes.

2. Write the alphabet in cursive as fast as you can. You have 2 minutes.

How did the nondominant hand exercise feel?

If you had this difficulty, what strategies might you have developed to cope?

What might W-2 workers see applicants/participants with this disability doing?

How might workers assist applicants/participants with this disability?
Directionality

If a person is having this difficulty, what areas of everyday life might be affected?

How could a directionality impairment affect a person on the job?

What coping strategies might a person with directionality impairment use? What are some things you have observed with participants that might have been related to directionality?

Could your agency’s floor plan or maps to supportive services be marked better to ease participants’ ability to navigate?
**Dyscalculia**

How would dyscalculia manifest itself in everyday life?

How might dyscalculia hinder a participant in the W-2 program?

What coping strategies might a person with dyscalculia use?
Memory Problems

What are some ways we move short-term memory information into long-term memory storage?

How is information linked for retrieval?

What coping strategies might a person with memory problems develop?
Social Naiveté

What implications might social naiveté have on a person’s everyday life?

How might social naiveté affect a participant’s work or contacts with W-2 staff or co-workers?

How might social naiveté affect job retention?
**Inappropriate Independence**

How might this difficulty affect someone at work?

How might this difficulty affect the relationship with a worker?

What strategies might an individual use to minimize the problems caused by inappropriate independence?

Included in the Appendix to this Participant Guide is the desk aid *Characteristics of Learning Difficulties with Examples.*
Co-Occurring Issues for Individuals with Learning Disabilities

In addition to the impact learning disabilities can have on employment search and subsequent employment, those with learning disabilities can be more vulnerable to other issues or problems. Some of this may be attributed to low self-esteem and a desire to “fit in.” Some might be attributed to the disabilities themselves; for example, difficulty reading social cues, social naiveté, impulsivity, and risk-taking.

Abuse Issues

Individuals with learning disabilities also may deal with the following abuse issues:

- Substance and alcohol abuse.
- Abusive relationships: Increased vulnerability to becoming a victim of abuse due to low self-esteem and naiveté.
- Increased chance of becoming abusive due to low self-esteem and impulsivity.
- Sexual assault: Increased vulnerability to sexual assault due to difficulty reading cues and reluctance to get someone angry. Increased chance of becoming sexually assaultive due to need to dominate, low self-esteem and impulsivity.

Physical and Mental Health

Other nonevident problems may exist, most often depression and attempted suicide.

- Individuals with LD may be prone to accident and injury. There may be a high number of traffic accidents and a higher rate of risk taking behavior.

Involvement in the Criminal Justice System

- Individuals with LD have a higher rate of petty crimes.
- There is a high proportion of individuals with LD in prison.
Serving W-2 Participants with Learning Disabilities

Learning Disabilities and the Law

Much of the progress made in assuring civil rights protections for adults with learning disabilities has been achieved by guarantees provided in federal law.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004, PL 108-446) is an education law that applies to young people with disabilities from birth to 21 years of age (defined as up to the 22nd birthday) who require special education and related services. The sections pertaining to school-age students also apply to young adults under the age of 22 who have not obtained a regular high school diploma. All education programs that receive federal funds, which include all public schools, must adhere to the provisions of this law.

Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, PL 93-112, states that “No individual with a disability in the United States shall, solely by reason of his or her disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance or any program or activity conducted by an Executive agency.” This covers any state or local agency, private institution or organization, or any public or private entity that:

- Operates, provides or engages in health or social service programs and activities; and
- Receives Federal financial assistance from DHHS directly or through another recipient/covered entity.

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, PL 101-336, requires that “No qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of a public entity or be subjected to discrimination by any such entity.”
U.S. DHHS Office for Civil Rights Guidance

I. Ensuring equal access to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) programs through the provision of appropriate services.
II. Making reasonable modifications to policies, practices, and procedures that deny equal access to individuals with disabilities.
III. Ensuring that the agency’s methods of administration in TANF programs do not result in disability-based discrimination.

Equal Access

- People with disabilities have a legal right to equal access to all TANF programs for which they are qualified;
- TANF programs must give people with disabilities an opportunity to participate in or benefit from TANF programs that is equal to the opportunity the agency offers to individuals without disabilities; and
- TANF programs must provide clients with disabilities with services that are appropriate, and that give clients an equal opportunity to benefit from the agency’s job placement, education, skills training, employment and other TANF activities.

W-2 Policy Guidance: Screening & Assessment

The following W-2 policies clearly address the program’s screening and assessment requirements:

- W-2 Manual 5.1.1 and 5.1.2 – Assessment at Application and as Part of On-going Case Management
- W-2 Manual 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 – Informal Assessment and Informal Assessment Inventory
- W-2 Manual 5.4.1.1 and 5.4.1.2 – When and How to Use the Barrier Screening Tool (BST)
- W-2 Manual 5.5 – Formal Assessment

The W-2 Barrier Screening Tool (BST) is used to identify the potential presence or risk of a personal barrier to normal functioning in an employment setting. (The BST is voluntary, and applicants/participants may decline part or all of the BST.)

The responses to the BST questions provided by each W-2 applicant/participant will assist the FEP in determining if the individual could benefit from a formal assessment by a professional. The formal assessment results, in turn, will enable the FEP to make a more informed decision about the individual’s W-2 placement, the activities s/he is assigned to and any special services or work site accommodations that s/he may need. (W-2 Manual 5.4.1)
Accommodations

Programs that enroll adults with documented disabilities are responsible for ensuring that the services are accessible, and for providing reasonable accommodations in the availability and delivery of services.

Programs may not discriminate against individuals with disabilities when admitting them to a program or providing them with services. When providing services, programs must offer accommodations that will assist adults with learning difficulties to have an equal opportunity to participate in the program.

Adults with disabilities have the right to not be discriminated against when participating in programs. Adults with disabilities also have the right to choose whether to disclose their disability status. If adults expect disability-related accommodations, they have the responsibility to make their disabilities known, to provide appropriate documentation or be willing to participate in a formal assessment, and to request specific accommodations.

Programs must provide “reasonable accommodations” to qualified persons with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations are accommodations that make the program accessible to the individual with a disability. Such accommodations must be offered to a qualified individual with a disability unless the service provider can demonstrate that the accommodation would impose undue hardship on the program, or constitute a substantial alteration in the nature of the program.

Examples of accommodations that programs may provide for adults with learning difficulties, depending on the particular disability and need for accommodation, include, but are not limited to:

- Extended time for completing tests and assessments;
- Reduced visual or auditory distractions, such as a private room for completing forms;
- Auxiliary aids and assistive technology, such as might be available on job-search computer software;
- Large-print materials;
- Alternative forms for instructions, such as audiotaped instructions in addition to printed instructions for completing forms or taking assessments;
- A reader to assist the participant in completing forms or taking assessments;
- Individual time offered if group learning is difficult, as long as the individual time does not exclude the participant from the value of group experience and identity;
- Assessment of suspected disabilities.
**Video Reflections: "What Helps?"**

1. List the things that helped these individuals to work around their disabilities in the workplace.

2. What workplace accommodations do they seem to benefit from?

When informal and formal assessments have been completed and you have an understanding of the participant’s LD (or other medical or mental health disorder), an excellent online resource to determine the accommodation(s) that will meet his/her needs most effectively is the **Job Accommodation Network (JAN).**

[http://www.jan.wvu.edu/media/lear.htm](http://www.jan.wvu.edu/media/lear.htm)

JAN is a useful resource for W-2 staff as well as for employers who work with individuals with LD, addressing such issues as the disability, the ADA, and accommodating employees with LD.

The website’s searchable online accommodation page provides the user with information on limitations requiring accommodations on the job, questions to consider, examples of accommodations, and additional resources.
Video Reflections: "Accommodations and Techniques"

1. What are some of the accommodations listed in this segment?

2. Which accommodations could apply to the work you do with applicants/participants?

3. Which accommodations could apply to other areas of the applicant's/participants' involvement with your agency?
Resources

Identifying & Connecting with Resources

1. What resources are available in your community to meet the needs of applicants/participants with learning disabilities?

2. What resource gaps exist in your community?

3. What are some ways those gaps could be filled?
Ways to Help Participants Make Connections

1. Build relationships with resources before a participant needs them. Discuss the participant’s potential needs, such as reading/writing disabilities.

2. Find out what resources the participant has connected with in the past.

3. Tell the participant about resources as issues arise. Be careful not to overwhelm him/her.

4. Be clear about how the participant is to connect with any particular resource and why s/he is contacting the resource.

5. Offer to let the participant make a call with you present, or offer to call the resource with the participant present.

6. Building independence means helping the participant learn how to make his/her own way. Role-play the connection with the participant, with you pretending to be the person s/he is to contact.

7. Follow up with the participant and resource about the contact. Were both clear on intent? What are the next steps?

8. Follow up with the resource about appropriateness of your referrals or better ways to refer.
**Online Resources**

*Great Lakes ADA Center: Wisconsin Resources*


Access this website for ADA and accessibility-related resources located in Wisconsin.

*The International Dyslexia Association (IDA)*

[http://www.interdys.org](http://www.interdys.org)

The International Dyslexia Association (IDA) is the oldest such organization in the U.S., focusing on “information and referral services, research, advocacy and direct services to professionals in the field of learning disabilities.” Click the Dyslexia, Tell Me More button toward the top of the home page to access Frequently Asked Questions About Dyslexia.

*Learning Disabilities Association (LDA) of America*


From the “For Adults” page of the Learning Disabilities Association of America website, users can link to information about:

- Screening for adults with learning disabilities;
- Learning disabilities and the law;
- Workplace issues; and
- Social/emotional issues.
Learning Disabilities Association (LDA) of America; Adults with Learning Disabilities: An Overview
http://www.ldaamerica.org/aboutld/adults/special_pop/adult_ld.asp

The Learning Disabilities Association of America website also provides an overview of adults with LD, noting that in Kansas:

“Assessments were run on all enrollees…shortly after the reform measures instituting the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program were passed. 36% of the women tested as having learning disabilities or mild mental retardation. Several years later, after TANF moved the easier-to-place recipients into employment, the hard core unemployed who remained on the rolls represented an even higher proportion of people with disabilities. Over half of the TANF caseload today can be assumed to have learning disabilities, mental retardation, psychiatric or addictive disorders, or a combination thereof.”

Learning Disabilities Association (LDA) of Wisconsin
http://www.lda wisconsin.com/

Learning Disabilities Association (LDA) of Wisconsin offers support to adults and children with learning disabilities through advocacy, education, information and research. Click on “Helpful Links” in the website navigation menu to access resources ranging from free guides and booklets to a listing of professional organizations offering information about learning disabilities, including ADHD.

National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD)
http://www.ncld.org/

The National Center for Learning Disabilities website provides adults with learning disabilities information about being “In the Workplace” with such articles as:

- Disclosing LD in the Workplace
- Assessing Interests and Abilities
- Determining Your Marketable Skills
- Your Job Search: Filling Out a Job Application
- Strengths Vs. Challenges in the Workplace
- Common Problems and Easy Solutions in the Workplace for People with LD

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6 Copyright 2005 LDA of America
University of Washington DO-IT (Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology)
http://www.washington.edu/doit/Brochures/Technology/atpwld.html

The University of Washington DO-IT mission is to increase the successful participation of individuals with learning difficulties and disabilities in challenging academic programs and careers such as those in science, engineering, mathematics, and technology. This website provides the user with information on a number of assistive technology resources, from the high tech of word processors and reading systems to the low tech of Post-It Notes and highlighters.

Wisconsin Branch of the International Dyslexia Association (IDA)
http://www.wibida.org/

The focus of the Wisconsin Branch of the International Dyslexia Association is “learning credible information about reading disabilities and learning the skills needed to help remediate reading barriers.”

The Wisconsin Branch of the IDA can be reached via e-mail at WIBIDA@gmail.com or by voicemail at (608) 355-0911.
Best Practices

Model, Lead and Test

Researchers, educators and employment specialists have found that one strategy appears to be the most effective with individuals with learning disabilities. This strategy is known as *model, lead, and test*. You may hear similar terms used to describe this strategy, but *model, lead and test* is one of the most common.

It basically means:

- Show them  
- Help them walk through it  
- Watch them do it  

- Model  
- Lead  
- Test

There are some things to consider before you begin using this model. Identify each of the following statements as true or false.

1. **True or False** Become aware of assumptions you have made about the applicant/participant and his/her base knowledge, understanding, retention, needs and abilities.

2. **True or False** Isolate the basic components of information you need to impart to the applicant/participant.

3. **True or False** There is a high likelihood that the applicant/participant will confuse, misinterpret or over- (or under-) generalize the information you are giving. Anticipate this and use creative strategies to minimize these potential problems.

4. **True or False** The applicant/participant generally will not ask questions. You must test to verify understanding of concepts.

5. **True or False** The most effective setting for imparting information is one-on-one, rather than group.
**Case Manager & Job Seeker Demonstration Scenario: Model, Lead and Test**

**CASE MANAGER INSTRUCTIONS**
You have completed an employability plan with a participant. You need to assist the participant in learning how to keep a calendar of appointments. Don’t make assumptions about what the participant understands. Find ways to ask questions to find out what the participant understands and to explain things so that you are not patronizing. Use all three steps of model, lead and test.

**PARTICIPANT INSTRUCTIONS**
You have completed an Employability Plan with your Case Manager. The Case Manager needs to assist you in learning how to keep a calendar of appointments. Don’t overplay your part. Allow the Case Manager to figure out what you understand and use model, lead and test to work with you.

Here is a sample of how this could go:

Case Manager: Now that we have a plan in place, we need to talk about getting your daily activities on a schedule.

Here is a calendar [show job seeker the calendar; a blank sheet of paper will suffice for the role play] that you will be using to schedule your activities. Have you used a calendar like this before?

Participant: Yes, sort of like that.

Case Manager: How did it work for you?

Participant: It was a pain. I always had things in the wrong places and was always showing up at the wrong place anyway. It didn’t do any good. I do a better job just keeping things in my head.

Case Manager: I hear you had some frustration. And yet, there are some real advantages to having a calendar with all your appointments on it. For one thing, it would really help us to plan time and other appointments. Sometimes it does take a bit of getting used to. What did you think made it hard to use the last time you tried?

Participant: I never got the times filled in right. But I didn’t really have that many appointments before, either. Now I have to be all over the place.

Case Manager: Why don’t we give it a try for a while, and I’ll show you some things that might make it more useful. Instead of me just throwing it at you, why don’t we take it in smaller steps and fix problems as they come up.

Participant: All right. Let’s try.
Case Manager: I'll fill out some of it so you can see how it’s done. Ask me questions if I’m not being clear.

Let’s see, you have Job Club on the first and third Mondays of each month, from 9:00 to 11:00 in the morning. [Look at a calendar and point to the first Monday.]

I’m going to draw a line from the 9:00 spot to the 11:00 spot on the first Monday. Then I write Job Club in the area between [write it]. And I’ll do the same for the 3rd Monday [write it].

Then you need to be at your job site at 8:30 on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, and you’re there until 4:30. I’ll start with Tuesday and draw a line, starting at the 8:30 spot to the 4:30 spot. Then I write Keller Services in the area between [write it].

Then, of course, you would fill that in the same way for the other two days.

We can’t forget about the time it takes to get around. The school is close, so the two older kids can walk. What time do they need to leave the house?

Participant: 7:30.

Case Manager: So you’ll have time to get them off to school.

You said you plan to take the bus to get around? When does the bus get to your bus stop?

Participant: Quarter after and quarter to the hour.

Case Manager: If you catch the bus at 7:45, you should have time to drop off the baby at the daycare and get here or to work, right?

Participant: That should work. I practiced the work route like you suggested.

Case Manager: OK. In the 7:30 spot I’ll write “kids to school,” and in the 7:45 spot I’ll write “get on bus.”

Now, we need to do the same with getting home. Your boss told me the bus leaves there at 4:40. You’ll have to make sure to leave on time so you don’t miss it. You should get to the daycare and then home by 5:15. You said your neighbor is going to watch the two older kids until you get home?

Participant: She said she would. The kids know to go there.
Case Manager: So I’m going to mark off 4:30 to 5:15 as travel time, and I’ll write “bus home” in the spot.

   The great thing about having even your travel time in here is then people who try to schedule with you won’t do it during travel times. Be sure to bring your calendar with you to all appointments.

   There! Now it’s your turn. You give it a try. I filled out one of your work days. Why don’t you fill out another?

[Participant fills out the day.]

Case Manager: That looks good. And you remembered the travel time.

   Looks like you have a few appointments on Thursday. Why don’t you fill in your 10:00 doctor appointment?

[Participant fills it in.]

Case Manager: You got the appointment time correct. I see you plan 15 minutes to get there on the bus. Do you think that’ll get you there on time?

Participant: Yes. I’ve taken the bus there before. I don’t have to drop off the baby, so it should work.

Case Manager: Great! Now, don’t forget to write the doctor’s name in that spot.

[Participant writes it.]

Case Manager: And what about the travel time back home?

[Participant fills it in.]

Case Manager: Great. That looks like it’ll work.

Case Manager: OK, now there’s another appointment on Thursday, and that’s with me. You fill that in and I won’t say a word until you tell me you’re finished.

[Participant fills it in.]

Case Manager: OK. Let’s see. Yes, you remembered all the things to consider: the appointment time and the travel time here and home.

   Now here are a few suggestions for you. Keep your calendar with you so you can make any changes you need to. Also, use a pencil, rather than a pen, to make
your changes readable. And most important, look at it every day to keep on top of what you're doing.

So here's your job for the week before our next appointment on Thursday. Fill in your calendar for the rest of the month in pencil. Bring it with you next week, and we'll look it over together. And during the week, I would like you to keep checking it and trying to get used to using it. If you're having problems with it, don't worry about it. We'll see if we can solve them next week. Just do your best for now.
Isolating Components of Instructions: Expectations & Explanations

1. Identify an instruction or explanation that you must make to participants regularly. This can include directions to a resource room, an explanation of the purpose of a form, or another instruction.

2. Make a list of expectations and/or explanations that you will need to communicate to the participant; e.g., what, where, how, when and why.

3. What assumptions did you make while compiling your list, or what assumptions might you make while communicating this information to the participant?

4. Keeping in mind the effectiveness of Model, Lead and Test, describe how you would communicate the information to the participant in your example in #2 above.

5. Consider #4 above: where can you anticipate potential for confusion, misinterpretation, or overgeneralization?

6. What might you attempt to do to avoid this confusion, misinterpretation or overgeneralization?
Tips to Ensure Follow-through & Success

1. Invite a support person to the appointment, but speak to the participant, not through the support person.

2. Extend the courtesies you would to anyone.

3. If this is not the initial appointment, cover what the participant was to have done since the last appointment. Rather than asking general questions, such as, “What have you worked on since our last appointment?” go point-by-point, such as, “Did you talk with Aunt Carol about giving you rides?”

   EXPECT to repeat information. If you don’t, the applicant/participant may not ask you to. You only will be adding to the confusion.

4. Place all appointments and expectations (not just yours, but those of everyone the participant is working with) on a “master calendar.”

   If it is an agreed upon part of your collaborative case management process, copy the calendar regularly and share it with all other workers and agencies working with the participant (be sure to have signed Release of Information forms).

5. Use Model, Lead and Test when explaining anything to the participant. Remember to break down components and watch assumptions.

6. Involve the participant in developing his/her goals and objectives. It is necessary – they are his/her goals and objectives.

7. Build confidence by showing the participant his/her progress toward attaining goals. Check off items accomplished. Reinforce positive steps taken.

8. Keep expectations realistic. Don’t send the participant away with a long list of expectations.

9. Summarize key activities the participant has agreed to accomplish before the next appointment.

10. In order to increase the participant’s retention of expectations, schedule appointments more frequently so less needs to be covered at each meeting.

11. Mobilize resources. Find out who else can help the participant. You can’t do everything yourself.
Identifying the Participant’s Support System

Individuals with LD sometimes are socially isolated from others. However, they may have people in their lives that help or influence them in positive ways. You will be able to work more effectively with the participant if his/her support system is identified and brought into the process.

1. Who might be in the participant’s support system?

2. What questions might the worker ask the participant to begin identifying support people?

3. How might support people help workers be more effective with their participants?

4. How might support people hinder the worker’s effectiveness with his/her participants?
Tips for Workplace Success

1. Try to schedule interviews and on-site visits to get a feel for different kinds of workplace environments.

2. Request and review job descriptions before applying for positions.

3. Know your strengths and challenges and how these match up with different kinds of job positions.

4. Apply for job positions for which you have the knowledge, skills and abilities.

5. When you interview for a job, present yourself as a capable individual who can perform the job competently.

6. You can disclose your learning disability after the job has been offered. Make sure to disclose in person, not over the telephone. It's a good idea to share this information with your supervisor or with someone else present, possibly a staff person from the personnel or human resources department.

7. When you disclose that you have a learning disability, be sure to describe the necessary accommodations for you to perform your job, as well as the strategies you've developed that help you do your job well.

8. Request that your supervisor give you a list of job performance expectations in writing.

9. Ask for a schedule of when your performance evaluations will take place. Be sure to find out what the performance evaluation will entail and how your work will be evaluated.

10. Know when and how to request workplace accommodations.

11. If workplace accommodations are provided, be sure that you and your supervisor review how well the accommodations are working and agree to make adjustments if necessary.

12. Never use your learning disability as an excuse for not doing your best.

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Practice Scenarios

Becky (New Employment)

The FEP has been working with Becky, who has been in a CSJ placement for the past 2 months. Becky has been doing packaging and light assembly work at her worksite in addition to doing job search. Becky also is working on her GED and only has her math test left to take. She has reported that she does not like math and it is very hard for her. Becky enjoys her worksite and has had almost perfect attendance. She relies on public transportation to get to the neighborhood where her 1-year-old son’s daycare is located, and then walks to her worksite or the Job Center.

Becky just has been hired to work full time on an assembly line at a local manufacturing plant. She enjoys this type of work and is very excited. The FEP is meeting with her today to update her EP and arrange necessary supportive services. Becky is able to continue using the same daycare, but now will need to take a bus from the daycare to the manufacturing plant. The FEP and Becky look at the bus schedule together and find out what bus she needs to take from the daycare to her job (the 29 or Industrial Park bus) and then back to the daycare. Becky is writing this down as the FEP speaks to her. The FEP also asks Becky if she needs steel-toed boots or anything else for the job. Becky said that she did not. The FEP wishes Becky the best, and Becky heads out of the office.

The FEP follows up with the employer on Becky’s first morning of work; she is told that Becky never showed up. The FEP calls Becky to find out what happened. Becky tells the FEP that the bus with the route number she wrote down never showed up at 6:30 AM like it should have, and she had no way to get to work. She is in tears and wants to go back to her CSJ worksite because she knows how to get there.

What are some possible reasons for Becky not showing up for her job? (Include any learning disability/disabilities that may have impacted Becky’s behavior.) What steps could the FEP have taken to help Becky?
Laurie (Job Retention)

Laurie has been working for the last 6 months as a receptionist at a college campus, and is receiving CMF services. Her main responsibilities have been answering the phone and doing some office work. This job was a temporary assignment. The job ends in two weeks, and the college would like to hire Laurie for a permanent position for 30 hours per week. She will receive a pay increase and benefits. The job would be at the college doing receptionist work and some office work for various college departments.

Laurie has a 9-year-old daughter, and daycare is in place for her. She also has a dependable vehicle and valid driver’s license. Laurie feels this will be the perfect job for her. She meets with her FEP to make the necessary updates.

A month later, Laurie calls her FEP and is very upset. Her boss has given her a written warning because she has been late to work five times in the last month. The FEP is confused and asks Laurie what is happening. Laurie explains that she seldom works in the same building or department for more than a day. She said that the campus is huge, and her boss needs to understand that she cannot always figure out where she needs to be. Her boss also needs to give her more time to get to her work assignments.

The FEP asks Laurie if she has a map of the campus. She said her boss gave her one, but it really does not help her. She usually can find the right building, but the buildings are large with many entrances, and sometimes she gets lost after she is in the building.

What can Laurie do so she gets to her work locations on time? (Include any learning disability/disabilities that may have impacted Laurie’s situation.) How can the FEP help her?
Brian (Job Search)

Brian recently applied for W-2. He had worked for over 10 years at a local factory. The factory closed about 9 months ago, and his UI has ended. Brian has a 14-year-old son. Brian has a valid driver’s license, but right now his car needs some minor repairs. He can use his mom’s car.

Brian told the FEP that he did some job search when he was receiving unemployment benefits, but admits he could have put more effort into it. He does have a letter of recommendation from his previous employer. Both he and the FEP feel that he is ready for job search. He never finished high school and is not interested in this now. He just wants to find a job.

Brian is assigned to job search, and is to attend Job Club two afternoons per week. Every morning, he is assigned to an 8:30 AM group check-in with his FEP in the resource room to get assignments for the day. The assignments are in written format, and include information on job leads, on-site employer recruitment, job fairs, resume workshops, etc. At this check-in, the FEP explains to the group that she is available to answer any questions that they may have. Brian never stays to ask questions with the group, and is always in a rush.

Brian is required to “check-out” at the end of the day with resource room staff and turn in an activity sheet listing what he did while in the resource room and/or other daily assignments. Both Brian and the staff person sign off on his activity sheet. This procedure is policy within this agency.

Brian comes in the first three days to get his assignments from the FEP, and also attends Job Club for two afternoons. Brian also checks out on the first three days with resource room staff at the end of the day. On days 4 and 5, Brian does not come in, nor does he call. The resource room staff tells the FEP that Brian did show for a short while on days 4 and 5, but just wandered around and did not want any help.

The FEP is confused by Brian’s behavior and calls him in for an appointment. Brian tells her that he does not want to deal with all the paperwork; he only wants to find a job. He said that he has been out talking to some employers and has a few leads. He does not think he needs a resume and that his word, along with his letter of recommendation, should be enough. The FEP asks if he has completed any applications. He said that his mom has filled out a few for him.

**Why is Brian not following his plan when he says that he wants to find a job?** (Include any learning disability/disabilities that may have impacted Brian’s behavior.) How can the FEP help him?
Key Points in Working with W-2 Applicants/Participants with LD

1. Learning disabilities can be managed, and functional abilities can be improved, but there is no complete recovery or cure. These individuals will cope with their disabilities all their lives.

2. Individuals will need ongoing intermittent support. After they are settled into a situation, they may not need support until the situation changes. Ongoing intermittent support may be necessary for the rest of their lives.

3. Individuals find personal value in successful work situations. For some, a work placement may be their first real success. Past failure, or the fear of failure, may have prevented many from pursuing employment. Individuals’ current reactions are a reflection of their past experiences with institutions.

4. Stress is created in any family undergoing changes, such as having a stay-at-home parent suddenly working full-time. The stress in a household with a parent with a learning disability may be greater. Coordination of services will be helpful where possible. Individuals with learning disabilities may have great difficulty in comprehending and/or acting upon the expectations placed upon them by policy. Explanatory brochures, letters, or fact sheets may hold little meaning.

5. Is the agency user-friendly for individuals with learning disabilities?
   a. Is orientation done in groups, or one-on-one?
   b. What options are available for completing forms?
   c. Are workers trained to recognize characteristics of undiagnosed disabilities that might explain apparent noncompliance?
   d. Are workers prepared to repeat information at each meeting, and are they willing (and given the opportunity) to break down the process into understandable “chunks?”
   e. What freedom or time constraints do workers have in contacting the participant’s extended family/support network?
   f. Are reasonable accommodations and/or assistive technology available to assist participants?
   g. Is the interagency process understandable to the participants?
   h. Do interagency teams share the participants’ calendars?

6. SSI is not a cure-all. Not everyone with a disability is on SSI.

7. A cooperative working relationship with DVR and other sources of diagnostic assessments and assistance/remediation should be developed before these sources are needed by applicants/participants.
   a. Have appropriate sources been identified for you?
   b. Is the referral process for these sources clear to you?
Check What You Know About Learning Disabilities Questions & Answers

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University of Missouri - Columbia
Columbia MO 65211

1. Individuals with LD usually have at least average intelligence.
   • **True**: Most individuals are in the average range on the “Curve of Normal Probability.”
     - LD can and does, however, occur outside the average range (e.g., borderline or gifted).

2. Individuals with LD show low, but consistent, performance.
   • **False**: Individuals with LD can show very high performance. One benchmark for individuals with LD is their inconsistency.

3. Individuals with LD often have sensory processing problems.
   • **True**: LD is a central nervous system processing disorder and has nothing to do with the individual’s sharpness of thought. It’s the actual processing of the signal (auditory, visual, tactile, and kinesthetic) that gets jumbled.

4. Individuals with LD often are associated with minimal brain dysfunction.
   • **True**: Although many adults with LD will not have an actual medical diagnosis, the assumption is that there are differences or difficulties in how the brain works. (Note that the term “minimal brain dysfunction” is no longer in scientific use. It is the “old” term for attention deficit disorder and/or hyperactivity.)

5. An individual with LD can have a family history of LD.
   • **True**: There are some types of LD that appear to have a strong genetic link. This doesn’t mean that all individuals with LD have an inherited disorder or even are predisposed to LD. There are several types of LD.

6. LD is seen more often in males than in females.
   • **True**: Part of the reason likely lies in a social/gender expectation issue. Current substantive research indicates that females are as likely as males to have LD.
7. LD tends to resolve itself and generally disappears in adolescence.
   - **False**: LD is a lifelong phenomenon. However, significant evidence exists that through effective accommodation, remediation and/or circumvention efforts, substantial improvement in the quality of life can be realized.

8. LD is not confined to academic deficits.
   - **True**: Academics are but one area in which LD manifests, and there are many reasons why an individual may demonstrate an academic deficit. LD is but one reason.

9. An estimated 50%-80% of individuals in adult education and literacy programs have LD.
   - **True**: Although no one knows the exact incidence, most authorities estimate the figure to be within these parameters. This underscores the importance of ruling out the disorder in every applicant/participant we serve.

10. Individuals with LD comprise 30% of the general population.
    - **False**: Again, although no one knows for sure, the incidence is thought to be high, but not this high. Typically, most authorities will not exceed the 10%-15% range.

11. An individual can have a diagnosis of LD and not be disabled.
    - **True**: Absolutely. The determination of a disability is a function of how the symptom/s impact daily activities. The key to severity of a disability is a function of its intensity, frequency and duration on the job or in life. Remind class of what was stated just before this exercise began: although learning disabilities are legally recognized as disabilities, they are not necessarily disabilities that would prevent a W-2 applicant/participant with appropriate accommodation(s) from being successfully employed.

12. Individuals with LD have more emotional disturbance than individuals without LD.
    - **True**: Some research evidence shows a co-morbid rate as high as 60%. This does not mean it is severe enough to warrant a Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV) diagnosis, but feelings of depression, etc., are common.

13. Individuals with LD also can have a coexisting ADHD.
    - **True**: Increasing research evidence shows a relationship as high as 33%.

14. LD can be determined using a recognized screening tool.
    - **False**: A screening tool is used to screen, not diagnose. It only can add credence to an assumption that the applicant/participant should likely be referred for diagnostic testing.
15. Individuals with LD should not be told they have a learning disability.
   • **False**: That is against the law.

16. Individuals with LD are guaranteed protection under the law.
   • **True**: Individuals with an officially diagnosed LD are entitled to protection under the law whether IDEA, Reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504), or ADA.
Legal Issues Related to Adults with Learning Disabilities

The following is excerpted and adapted from National Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities Center, “Legal Issues Related to Adults with Learning Disabilities,” 1999, and from materials from the LD-TANF Seattle Academy, March 11-15, 2002, co-sponsored by DOE, OVAE, NIFL, HHS and ACF.

For specific guidance, see Prohibition Against Discrimination on the Basis of Disability in the Administration of TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) at www.hhs.gov/ocr/prohibition.html.

A Learning Disability Is a Disability

The ADA of 1990 defines an individual with a disability as a person who:

• has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more “major life activities”;
• has a record of such an impairment; or
• is regarded as having such an impairment.

Specific learning disabilities are examples of mental impairments. Major life activities include functions such as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working. Thus, an individual who has a learning disability may be entitled to certain rights and responsibilities. Legal protections exist for individuals with disabilities to ensure equal opportunity. Because rights and responsibilities are mandated, equal opportunity is guaranteed and not just expected.

Titles I and II of the ADA’s five sections are most relevant to serving TANF participants with learning disabilities:

• Title I prohibits employment discrimination.
• Title II deals with discrimination in public settings.

Title II mandates that a public entity, including all states, counties and other local governments administering all or part of a TANF program, shall make reasonable modifications to policies, practices, or procedures when modifications are necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of a disability. Title II also requires the provision of accessible facilities and auxiliary aids and services by public programs.

Examples of entities covered under TANF:

• State, county and local welfare agencies;
• Programs for families, youth and children;
• Job training programs;
• Welfare-to-work agencies;
• Contractors, subcontractors and vendors, whether public, private, for-profit or nonprofit.
## Characteristics of Learning Difficulties with Examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of Reading Difficulties</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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</table>
| Does not read for pleasure             | ➢ Engages in leisure activities other than reading magazines or books, claiming to prefer pursuits that are more active  
                                         | ➢ Does not read stories to his/her children |
| Does not use reading to gather information | ➢ Cannot easily use materials like newspapers and classified ads to obtain information |
| Has problems identifying individual sounds in spoken words | ➢ Does not attempt to sound out words in reading, or does so incorrectly |
| Often needs many repetitions to learn to recognize a new or unused word | ➢ May encounter a newly-learned word in a text and not recognize it when it appears later in that text |
| Relies heavily on context to read new or unused words | ➢ When attempting to decode a word, says a word that may make sense in the text, but may not be related phonologically (for example, from context, guesses “car” when the word is actually “automobile”) |
| Oral reading contains many errors, repetitions, and pauses | ➢ Reads slowly and laboriously, or not at all  
                                         | ➢ May refuse to read orally |
| Efforts in reading are so focused on word recognition that they detract from reading comprehension | ➢ Loses the meaning of text, but understands the same material when it is read aloud |
| Has problems with comprehension that go beyond word recognition; may have limited language skills that affect comprehension | ➢ Does not understand the text when it is read to him/her |
| Has limited use of reading strategies; is an inactive reader, not previewing text, monitoring comprehension, or summarizing what is read | ➢ When prompted to do so, does not describe strategies used to assist with decoding and comprehension of text |
| Practices reading rarely, which may compound reading difficulties; lacks complex language and word knowledge | ➢ Recognizes and uses fewer words, expressions, and sentence structures than peers |

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8 Adapted from the National Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities Center, a project of the National Institute for Literacy (1999). *Bridges to practice: a research-based guide for literacy practitioners serving adults with learning disabilities*. Washington, D.C.
### Characteristics of Writing Difficulties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difficulties</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| Has difficulty communicating through writing     | ➢ Rarely writes letters or notes  
➢ Needs help completing forms such as job applications                                                                                   |
| Written output is severely limited               | ➢ Struggles to produce a written product  
➢ Produces short sentences and text with limited vocabulary                                                                               |
| Writing is disorganized                          | ➢ Omits critical parts, or puts information in the wrong place  
➢ Writing lacks transition words                                                                                                           |
| Lacks a clear purpose for writing                | ➢ Does not communicate a clear message  
➢ Expresses thoughts that do not contribute to the main idea                                                                                 |
| Does not use the appropriate text structures      | ➢ Uses sentences that contain errors in syntax or word choice  
➢ Fails to clearly indicate the referent of a pronoun                                                                                      |
| Shows persistent problems in spelling            | ➢ Spells phonetically  
➢ Leaves out letters  
➢ Refrains from writing words that are difficult to spell                                                                                   |
| Has difficulties with mechanics of written expression | ➢ Omits or misuses sentence markers, such as capitals and end punctuation, making it difficult for the reader to understand the text             |
| Handwriting is sloppy and difficult to read       | ➢ Has awkward writing grip or position  
➢ Letters, words, and lines are misaligned or not spaced appropriately                                                                         |
| Demonstrates difficulties in revising            | ➢ Is reluctant to proofread, or does not catch errors  
➢ Focuses primarily on the mechanics of writing, not on style and content                                                                         |

### Characteristics of Listening Difficulties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difficulties</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has problems perceiving slight distinctions in words</td>
<td>➢ Misunderstands a message with a word mistaken for a similar word (for example, misunderstands “Pick up the grass” for “Pick up the glass”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a limited vocabulary</td>
<td>➢ Recognizes and uses fewer words than peers when engaged in conversation or when gathering information by listening</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Finds abstract words or concepts difficult to understand | ➢ Requests repetitions or more concrete explanations of ideas  
➢ Frequently asks for examples                                                                                                               |
| Has difficulty with nonliteral or figurative language, such as metaphors, idioms, and sarcasm | ➢ Does not understand jokes or comic strips                                                                                                 |
| Confuses the message in complex sentences         | ➢ May eat lunch first if given the direction, “Eat lunch after you take this to the mailroom.”                                           |
| Has difficulty with verbal memory                 | ➢ Does not remember directions, phone numbers, jokes, stories, etc.                                                                      |
| Has difficulty processing large amounts of spoken language | ➢ Gets lost listening in group presentations, complaining that people talk too fast                                                                 |

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of Speaking Difficulties</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mispronounces words</td>
<td>Adds, substitutes, or rearranges sounds in words, as in phenomenon for phenomenon or Pacific for specific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses the wrong word, usually with similar sounds</td>
<td>Uses a similar-sounding word, like generic instead of genetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confuses the morphology, or structure, or words</td>
<td>Uses the wrong form of a word, such as calling the Declaration of Independence the Declaring of Independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a limited vocabulary</td>
<td>Uses the same words over and over in giving information and explaining ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Has difficulty conveying ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes grammatical errors</td>
<td>Omits or uses grammatical markers incorrectly, such as tense, number, possession, and negation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks with a limited repertoire of phrase and sentence structure</td>
<td>Uses mostly simple sentence construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overuses “and” to connect thoughts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has difficulty organizing what to say</td>
<td>Has problems giving directions or explaining a recipe; talks around the topic (circumlocutes), but doesn’t get to the point</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has trouble maintaining a topic</td>
<td>Interjects irrelevant information into a story</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Starts out discussing one thing, then goes off in another direction without making the connection</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has difficulty with word retrieval</td>
<td>Cannot call forth a known word when it is needed, and may use fillers, such as um, and you know</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>May substitute a word related in meaning or sound, as in boat for submarine, or selfish for bashful</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>May use an “empty word,” such as thing or stuff</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>May describe rather than name, as in a boat that goes underwater to describe a submarine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has trouble with the pragmatic or social use of language</td>
<td>Does not follow rules of conversation, such as turn-taking</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does not switch styles of speaking when addressing different people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics of Mathematics Difficulties</td>
<td>Examples</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does not remember and/or retrieve math facts</td>
<td>Uses a calculator or counts on fingers for answers to simple problems (like 2 x 5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does not use visual imagery effectively</td>
<td>Cannot do math in his or her head, and writes down even simple problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has visual-spatial deficits</td>
<td>Confuses math symbols</td>
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<td>Becomes confused with math operations, especially multi-step processes</td>
<td>Leaves out steps in math problem-solving, or does them in the wrong order</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has difficulties in language processing that affect the ability to do math problem solving</td>
<td>Does not translate real-life problems into the appropriate mathematical processes; avoids employment situations that involve this set of skills</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of Thinking Difficulties</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has problems with abstract reasoning</td>
<td>Asks to see ideas on paper</td>
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<td>Shows marked rigidity in thinking</td>
<td>Resists new ideas or ways of doing things and may have difficulty adjusting to changes on the job</td>
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<td>Thinking is random, as opposed to orderly, either in logic or chronology</td>
<td>May have good ideas that seem disjointed, unrelated, or out of sequence</td>
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<td>Has difficulty synthesizing ideas</td>
<td>Pays too much attention to detail, and misses the big picture or idea when encountering specific situations at home or at work</td>
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<td>Makes impulsive decisions and judgments</td>
<td>&quot;Shoots from the hip&quot; when arriving at conclusions or decisions; does not use a structured approach to weigh options</td>
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<td>Has difficulty generating strategies to acquire/use information and solve problems</td>
<td>Approaches situations without a game plan, acting without a guiding set of principles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Characteristics of Other Difficulties</td>
<td>Examples</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has problems with attention, which may be accompanied by hyperactivity, distractibility, or passivity</td>
<td>➢ Does not focus on a task for an appropriate length of time</td>
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<td>➢ Cannot seem to get things done</td>
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<td>➢ Does better with short tasks</td>
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<td>Displays poor organizational skills</td>
<td>➢ Doesn’t know where to begin tasks/how to proceed</td>
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<td>➢ Doesn’t work within time limits, failing to meet deadlines</td>
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<td>➢ Workspace and personal space are messy</td>
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<td>Has eye-hand coordination problems</td>
<td>➢ Omits or substitutes elements when copying information from one place to another, such as invoices or schedules</td>
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<td>Demonstrates poor fine motor control, usually accompanied by poor handwriting</td>
<td>➢ Avoids jobs requiring manipulation of small items</td>
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<td>➢ Becomes frustrated when putting together toys for children</td>
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<td>Lacks social perception</td>
<td>➢ Stands too close to people when conversing</td>
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<td>➢ Does not perceive situations accurately; may laugh when something serious is happening, or slap an unreceptive boss on the back in an attempt to be friendly</td>
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<td>Has problems establishing social relationships; problems may be related to spoken language disorders</td>
<td>➢ Does not seem to know how to act and what to say to people in specific situations, and may withdraw from socializing</td>
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<td>Lacks “executive functions,” including self-motivation, self-reliance, self-advocacy, and goal-setting</td>
<td>➢ Demonstrates over-reliance on others for assistance, or fails to ask for help when appropriate</td>
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<td>➢ Blames external factors on lack of success</td>
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<td>➢ Does not set personal goals and work deliberately to achieve them</td>
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<td>➢ Expresses helplessness</td>
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W-2 Service Scenario: Sonia

Sonia is a 27-year-old single mother of two children, 7 and 9 years old.

Sonia has been unemployed for a nearly a month before she decides to apply for W-2. She tells her FEP that she has been employed as a sales associate with a number of retailers at both East Towne and West Towne Malls, but that she has never been able to keep those jobs for very long. Laughing with embarrassment, she describes to the FEP her long-term troubles with numbers; for example, math through her school years was a nightmare, and then there are her issues with keeping her checkbook balanced, not, she says, that there’s much money in the account. She insists that she loves being a sales associate. Although ringing up sales can be difficult, she enjoys maintaining a friendly relationship with the customers she meets. She feels that sales associates are like a store’s customer service ambassadors and she loves it. She just wishes she could keep a job. It has been very frustrating.

In each interaction, Sonia presents a professional demeanor to the FEP. She is well-spoken and smartly dressed in business casual. Through the informal assessment, the FEP understands that there is the issue with math and suggests that Sonia take the BST, explaining what is involved with this screening, the potential for referral for a formal assessment, and how both the BST and, if needed, a formal assessment could benefit her while being engaged in the W-2 program and afterward, as she continues in the workforce. Sonia is not interested in the BST at this point.

The FEP places Sonia in a CSJ with an emphasis in her Employability Plan (EP) on a Work Experience activity with one of the W-2 agency’s partners, a store/worksite called Second Hand Thrift. Although the worksite supervisor and her coworkers enjoy working with Sonia, it soon is apparent that her problems as a sales associate continue, particularly when running the cash register.

As Sonia’s FEP, what next steps would you take?

The formal assessment performed by a neuro-psychologist results in Sonia being diagnosed with the learning disability dyscalculia. How would this impact her EP?