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Tinian Participants Complete Basic American Sign Language Class for Service Providers



On May 1st, Twelve participants from Tinian completed 24 hours of Basic American Sign Language training geared towards building capacity within services providers. The said program was sponsored by the Northern Marianas College University Center of Excellence for Developmental Disabilities (NMC-UCEDD) and the University of Hawaii Pacific Basin UCEDD.

During the course participants learned that American Sign Language (ASL) is a complete, complex language that employs signs made by moving the hands combined with facial expressions

and postures of the body. Furthermore participants were introduced to American Sign Language. Topics such as mechanics, parameters of signs, basic vocabulary (work-related), sign simple sentences, history, fingerspelling, and numbers.

Participants were also exposed to the basic elements of Deaf Culture and the Deaf Community. They also became familiarized with terminology and concepts associated with ASL, and practice basic conversation that includes

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Participants also learned that American Sign Language (ASL) is the predominant sign language of Deaf Communities in the United States. Besides North America, dialects of ASL and ASL-based creoles are used in many countries around the world. ASL use has propagated widely via schools for the deaf and Deaf community organizations. Despite its wide use, no accurate count of ASL users has been taken, though reliable estimates for American ASL users range from 250,000 to 500,000 persons, including a number of children of deaf adults.

On our March - May 2016 release of Disability Watch Newsletter, we had three reflections from Vince Merfalen, whose name was not printed.

Article 1 information is below:

Race, Culture, and Autism Spectrum Disorder:
Understanding the Role of Diversity in Successful Educational Interventions
By: Tincani, M., Travers, J., & Boutot, E. (2009, September).
Submitted by: Vince Merfalen
1 March 2016

Article 2 information is below:

Reflection on the article:
Does Special Education raise academic achievement for students with disabilities?
By: Hanushek, E. A., Kain, J. F., & Rivkin, S. G. (1998)
Submitted by: Vince Merfalen
2 March 2016

Article 3 information below:

Reflection on the article:
Disability in Multicultural Theory: Conceptual and Social Justice Issues
By: Anastaiu, D., Kaufman, J. M., & Michail, D. (2014)
Submitted by: Vince Merfalen
2 March 2016



talking about other people and activities, giving directions, and making requests. Participants also develop discourse skills appropriate for establishing connections with deaf acquaintances, identify technology/resources available to facilitate communication, and identify local and federal resources for the Deaf.

In conclusion, we congratulate the participants on their accomplishment. Also we thank the staff of the Tinian Northern Marianas Campus, Tinian Public School System for supporting the program. It is hoped that in the near future there will be enough participants to hold another class in Basic ASL. For more information, please call Mr. Floyd Masga, UCEDD Director at 234-5498 or email at floyd.masga@marianas.edu



Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act Training - January 2016



Dr. Chaz Compton of the San Diego State University's Workforce Innovation and Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC) is seated fourth from left.

The CNMI Disability Network Partners – comprised of the Council on Developmental Disabilities, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, State Rehabilitation Council, Northern Marianas Protection & Advocacy Systems, Inc., Center for Living Independently, Department of Labor/Workforce Investment Agency, Special Education Program, Maternal Child Health Program, Statewide Independent Living Council, and Adult Basic Education Program – sponsored the WIOA conference and training held at the Kanoa Resort and Pacific Islands Club on January 11-15, 2016.

Topics covered were: (1) Overview of WIOA and the changes to the Rehabilitation Act, (2) Integration of the core partners in the Workforce Development System; (3) Common performance measures; (4) Strategic planning; (5) Youth services in WIOA, pre-employment transition services, and work experiences; (6) The VR process with a focus on eligibility; and (7) Unified state planning.

The CNMI core partners in the implementation of WIOA are the Workforce Investment Agency, Adult Basic Education, and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. CNMI's Unified State Plan for 2017-2020 was submitted to the U.S. Department of Labor on April 1, 2016. After the USP is approved at the Federal level, OVR will make the document available on their website at www.ovrgov.net.





CNMI COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM

Assistive Technology Presentation, Device Demonstration and Exhibits



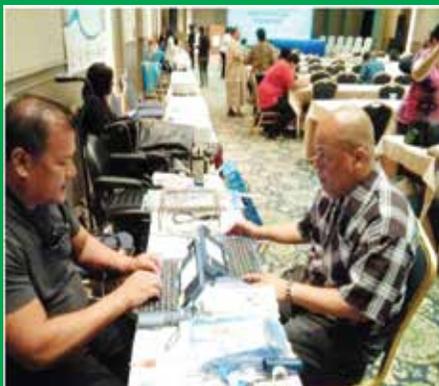
2016 Developmental Disabilities and Employment Awareness Month (DDEAM) Conference in March
Assistive Technology Program's presentation



AT staff conducted a presentation on Reasonable Accommodations and AT in the Workplace during the 2016 DDEAM

Device Demonstration of Assistive Technology Devices during 2016 DDEAM Conference in March.

AT staff participated as an exhibitor during the 2016 DDEAM Conference. Employers from the private sector and CNMI Policy-makers participated in a demonstration of the UBI-DOU, which is a communication device for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.



Women's Health Month AT Exhibit



AT staff participated as an exhibitor during the 2016 Women's Health Month Programming and Activities.



Rota and Tinian AT Exhibit and Presentation



ASSISTIVE DEVICES

Wheelchairs, Walkers, Canes and Other Devices to Help with Daily Tasks

What Are Assistive Devices?

Assistive devices can help a person function better and be more independent. Assistive devices can make daily tasks easier.

What Do You Need to Know?

There are many different assistive devices to choose from. They can range from simple to complex. Schedule an appointment with a physical or occupational therapist to get an assessment. Ask questions about what devices would be best to fit your needs in the various environments you will utilize the device.

What Are the Different Types of Independent Living Aids?

Many devices are available to help with activities of daily living (ADLs). ADLs are the normal everyday tasks that people do. These include cooking, eating and house cleaning. ADLs also include personal care tasks like bathing and using the bathroom.

Examples of helpful devices:

Kitchen aids help with cooking and feeding oneself:

Rocker knives for one-hand
Easy to grip silverware
Jar openers
Reaching tools



Bathroom aids help with bathing and toileting:
Hand-held shower head
Transfer bench for tub
Shower chair
Grab bars by toilet



Bedroom aids make moving around at night safer:
Bedside commodes
Transfer boards
Night lights



Grooming aids help with personal hygiene needs:
Long-handled combs and brushes
Electric toothbrushes
No-rinse shampoo and body wash



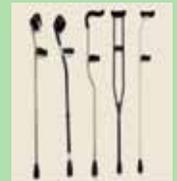
What Are the Different Types of Mobility Aids?

Mobility aids help with walking or moving from place to place. They can help prevent falls and improve independence

Gait belts and lift vests:
Make lifts and transfers safer
Provide secure handhold for caregivers when walking is unstable
Help caregiver balance survivor



Crutches:
Provide support under the arm to take stress off the leg
More stable than canes
Various types of crutches are available



Canes:
Decrease stress on the weak or affected leg
Simple but effective walking tools
Widen the base of support
Various types of canes are available



Walkers:
Offer additional support to make up for lost strength
Provide maximum stability
Should be sized to fit user
Various types of walkers are available



What Are the Different Types of Wheelchairs?

Wheelchairs are designed to help those who can no longer walk safely. They come in many shapes, sizes and varieties.

Manual wheelchairs:
Depends on physical strength of the user or attendant
Require arm or leg strength to move – unless there is someone to push
Lightweight; easy to push and maneuver (dependent on weight of user)
Less costly than motorized wheelchairs



Scoters:
Work well for people who can get in and out of a chair
Often less expensive than powered wheelchairs
Easier to maneuver than a standard wheelchair



Motorized or electric wheelchairs:
Powered by battery or electricity
Less physical exertion is required
No one needs to assist user
Must be able to make decisions and maneuver safely

For more information please contact the Assistive Technology Program at 664-7003, TTY 664-7005 or email rdiaz.cnmicdd@gmail.com. Located in Capitol Hill Bldg. 1310.

How to Request an Accommodation

(Adapted from the Job Accommodations Network)

How do I know when to request an accommodation?

- You can request an accommodation at any time during the application process or while you are employed.
- In general, you should request an accommodation when you know that there is a workplace barrier that is preventing you, due to a disability, from competing for a job, performing a job, or gaining equal access to a benefit of employment like an employee lunch room or employee parking.
- As a practical matter, it is better to request an accommodation before your job performance suffers or conduct problems occur because employers do not have to rescind discipline that occurred before they knew about your disability.

How do I request an accommodation?

- According to the EEOC, you only have to let your employer know that you need an adjustment or change at work for a reason related to a medical condition. You can use “plain English” to make your request and you do not have to mention the ADA or use the phrase “reasonable accommodation.”
- You may want to put your request in writing even if your employer does not require it. Sometimes it is useful to have a paper trail in case there is a dispute about whether or when you requested accommodation.

Do I have to tell my employer that I have a disability?

- Under the ADA, employers are only required to provide accommodations for employees who are experiencing workplace problems because of a disability.
- Therefore, unless you let your employer know that you have a

disability, the employer is not obligated to consider accommodations under the ADA.

How much medical information do I have to provide my employer?

- If you prefer not to give a lot of information, you may want to limit the medical information you initially give to your employer when you request an accommodation. For example, you may want to tell your employer what you are having trouble doing, that the problem is related to a disability, and what your accommodation ideas are.
- Employers have the right to request additional medical information when an employee requests an accommodation and if you do not provide it, the employer can deny your accommodation request.

What accommodations can I request?

- In general, an accommodation is any change in the work environment or in the way things are customarily done that enables an individual with a disability to enjoy equal employment opportunities. Under the ADA, employers are required to provide “reasonable” accommodations for employees with disabilities. Therefore, you can request an accommodation that is considered “reasonable.”
- Here are some examples of reasonable accommodations from the EEOC:
 - Making existing facilities accessible
 - Job restructuring
 - Part-time or modified work schedules
 - Acquiring or modifying equipment
 - Changing tests, training materials, or policies
 - Providing qualified readers or

interpreters

- Reassignment to a vacant position
 - Medical leave
 - Work from home
- The following are not considered forms of reasonable accommodation and therefore not required under the ADA:
 - Removing or eliminating an essential function from a job
 - Lowering production standards
 - Providing personal use items such as a prosthetic limb, a wheelchair, eyeglasses, hearing aids, or similar devices if they are also needed off the job
 - The only limitation on an employer’s obligation to provide reasonable accommodations is that no such change or modification is required if it would cause “undue hardship” to the employer. “Undue hardship” means significant difficulty or expense and focuses on the resources and circumstances of the particular employer in relationship to the cost or difficulty of providing a specific accommodation.

How long does my employer have to respond to my accommodation request?

- According to the EEOC, there is no specific amount of time that employers have to respond to an accommodation request, but they should respond as quickly as possible. Unnecessary delays in responding or implementing an accommodation can result in a violation of the ADA.

For more details, please visit the following link at <https://askjan.org/Eeguide/EeGuide.pdf>

If you are an employer interested in obtaining a sample reasonable accommodation form, please go to <https://askjan.org/media/raemployersform.htm>

June is Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Awareness Month

By: Cleo Nening, NMPASI Client Advocate



The month of June is proclaimed as PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) Awareness Month. Post traumatic stress disorder, as defined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder-Fifth Edition (DSM-5), “is a mental disorder that can develop after a person is exposed to a traumatic event, such as sexual assault, warfare, traffic collisions, or other threats on a person's life. Symptoms may include disturbing thoughts, feelings, or dreams related to the events, mental or physical distress to trauma-related cues, attempts to avoid trauma-related cues, alterations in how a person thinks and feels, and increased arousal.”

According to the National Center for PTSD, we can spread awareness in three ways:

1) Learn more about PTSD and how treatment works.

a. Discover the facts, visit www.ptsd.va.gov to start with PTSD Basics, key information about trauma, PTSD and treatment options. Take the PTSD Overview Course or other free, in-depth Continuing Education Courses (with the option to earn CE/CMEs).

b. Explore your options by taking the mystery out of PTSD treatment. Our short whiteboard video PTSD Treatment: Know your Options

reviews the best treatments. And visit About-Face, a website where Veterans, their family members and clinicians talk about turning life around with PTSD treatment.

2) Connect by reach out to someone.

a. Help someone. Help yourself. Do you think you might have PTSD or know someone at risk? Take action for yourself or someone you care about. We outline steps to help you know whether you might have PTSD and locate where to get help.

b. Give support. Get support. Managing PTSD can be easier with the support of others. If you are getting treatment, or have finished treatment, our self-help information and tools can help you manage stress. Caregivers can look to organizations that offer support for family and friends for tips on self-care too.



3) Share by spread the word.

a. Pass along what you learn. Use Facebook or Twitter to share up-to-date information or ask us questions about PTSD and treatment. Subscribe to the National

Center for PTSD email publications – PTSD Monthly Update, Clinician's Trauma UpdateOnline, and the PTSD Research Quarterly - and let others know they are free. Work together.

b. Join the PTSD Awareness campaign! The National Center for PTSD has promotional materials to help you organize an event or share information about PTSD and effective treatments

For more information about Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, please contact NMPASI at 235-7273/4 or visit us online at nmpasi.org