



A Clubhouse Program Empowering Persons

TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING WITH BRAIN INJURY SURVIVORS

By George A. Jones LSW/CCDP and Gail Held, LSW

Please use these tips as a guide. Asking the new employee about how to maximize communications will be the most effective. It is the role of the Job Coach to familiarize co-workers and supervisors with appropriate relationships and job responsibilities for a certain amount of time.

- Use concrete terms and/or terms that the person is familiar with. If you need to use new terms, teach their meaning first.
- Simplify your language but be sure to use age-appropriate words; treat adults like adults.
- Be positive in giving directions: tell the person what you want them to do.
- Give directions immediately before the activity. Avoid giving a long list of things to remember and attend to one subject at a time. Break instructions down into one or two tasks to complete at a time.
- Use memory aides such as having instructions written down, or use pictures and/or symbols for non-readers.
- Check in frequently for understanding.
- Rather than asking yes-or-no questions, ask an open-ended question or ask the person to repeat what you have said in their own words when checking for comprehension.
- Don't pretend to understand. Instead, ask the person to repeat themselves, to tell you another way or show you. You can help by checking out with the person what you do understand. For example, you can ask, "Do I have this part right?"
- Be prepared to wait. It may take the individual longer to process information or analyze a question.
- Do not anticipate another's response by answering for them. It may be helpful to use reflective listening.