

BOOKLET DYS Best Practices

DYS IN EDUCATION PROFESSIONAL LIFE AND WORK

Project N.: 2022-2-IE01-KA220-VET-000097062

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booklet DYS

in Education Professional life and work

DysinEduProWork, an Erasmus+ Project, addresses Dys-related challenges in partner countries (Ireland, Greece, Belgium, Estonia, Italy), aiding student transitions into the labour market.

By documenting prior research and support mechanisms for neurodivergent students entering the labour market, it informs stakeholders about the prevailing situation surrounding neurodiversity, thereby contributing to a wider assessment of the inclusion landscape in Europe.

It evaluates policies, laws, and best practices to enhance inclusivity for neurodivergent individuals, providing insights and recommendations for better support.

What you'll find

Discover the research on DYS disorders with these main topics.

- Overview of national reports
- Common challenges
- VET graduation specialty vs. job placement
- Overview of interviews with select auotes
- Overview of best practices
- Best practices for workers and employers
- Tools and guidelines for job search
- Tools and guidelines for the workplace

Training module

Usable by the future workers directly or by the VET providers

Support material

For neurodiverse workers and job seekers to learn how to enter the job market by overcoming the barriers they face

BOOKLET DYS Project

Neurodiverse youth transitioning from VET to workforce, with additional disadvantages.

The DYS project's main priority is to foster the inclusion of VET learners with Specific Learning Disorders (SLD), also called "Dys" disorders, in the job market through the creation of appropriate supporting tools, learning materials and training for them and their potential employers.



"Inclusive workplaces need adaptable VET tools for smoother transitions to job market."



01 European Analysis and best practices

02

Worker support guide and Toolbox

03





Employer's guide on neurodiversity in the workplace

Partnership

Ballymun Job Centre Co-operative Society Limited, IE (coordinator) LogoPsyCom, BE European Education & Learning Institute, EL Eurocultura, IT Viljandi Vocational Training Centre, EE

NATIONAL REPORTS Major Findings

Assessing policies and practices for enhanced VET-to-labour market transitions

Common findings across EU countries include legislative measures to support dys-learners in VET settings, though challenges persist.

National strategies prioritize equal access to education and employment, offering accommodations like assistive technology and individualized support plans.

However, gaps exist in implementation, such as insufficient resources and training for educators, hindering full inclusion and support for dys-learners.

Assessing policies and practices for enhanced transitions from VET to the labour market for neurodivergent individuals is important for several reasons:

Insights into neurodiversity prevalence and support mechanisms, contributing to broader inclusion efforts and informing on DysinEduProWork key discoveries.

1

Promoting Inclusivity

In a diverse workforce, fostering an inclusive environment is crucial. By evaluating existing policies and practices, we can identify areas where inclusivity can be improved, thereby ensuring that neurodivergent individuals have equal opportunities in the labour market.

22 Adapting to Changing Needs

As the workforce evolves due to globalization and technological advancements, the needs of neurodivergent individuals will also change. Analyzing current policies and practices allows us to adapt and develop strategies that meet evolving needs.



Understanding the European Landscape

By comprehensively assessing the inclusivity landscape at a European level and in partner countries, we gain insights into the specific challenges and opportunities faced by neurodivergent individuals in different contexts.

Identify Areas for Impact

By examining existing policies and practices, we can identify areas where the DysinEduProWork project can make a meaningful impact. This allows us to focus our efforts on areas where interventions are most needed.

5

Learning from Experience

Reviewing previously published reports and stories helps us understand the real-life experiences of neurodivergent individuals, including both challenges and successes. This knowledge informs the development of resources and support materials that resonate with stakeholders' experiences.

Tailoring Learning Tools

Research findings enable us to tailor innovative learning tools to meet the specific needs of neurodivergent individuals, ensuring that they receive the support necessary to succeed in education and the labour market.



Common traits across countries:

- 1. Legal frameworks safeguard Dys learners.
- 2. Inclusive education prioritized in policies.
- 3. Supportive practices include tailored accommodations.
- 4. Training for educators enhances inclusivity.
- 5. Emphasis on accessibility and equal opportunities.



Tools for talent acquisition managers and recruiters to improve their understanding of how they can better use the strenghts of workers with Dys disorders.



Main findings Belgium National report

Key considerations for employers.

EU Strategy Impact

European Disability Strategy fosters workplace inclusivity, emphasizing equal opportunities and accommodations for Dys learners.

Legislative Framework

Belgian Law of 2003 on Employment sets clear inclusion guidelines for Dys learners, yet implementation challenges persist.

Mandated Accommodations

Belgian labour laws require tailored accommodations, positively impacting Dys learners' workplace experience.



Vocational Training Programmes

Specialized programmes aim to enhance Dys learners' employability, but success varies based on program quality and resources.

Major Findings

Challenges for students going

into labour market.

1 Implementation Discrepancies

While national policies emphasize inclusive education, the implementation of these policies may vary across different regions and educational institutions.

This discrepancy can result in inconsistent support for dyslexic students as they prepare for vocational education and the labour market.

2 Effectiveness of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) While Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) are customized to meet dyslexic learners' unique needs, ensuring their effectiveness in preparing students for vocational settings poses challenges.

Addressing issues like access to accommodations and assistive technologies in the workplace remains a significant concern for optimizing IEP outcomes.

3 Teacher Training

Belgian secondary school teachers receive annual training, but it may not fully address dyslexic students' needs. While inclusive practices are sometimes covered, there's a call for more specialized training tailored to supporting dyslexic students in vocational education and the labour market.

Main findings Estonia National report

Key considerations for employers.

- Assistance Programmes for Workforce Inclusion Estonia's Unemployment Insurance Fund offers job assistants for persons with disabilities, aiding their integration into the workforce.
- Consultancy Service for Workplace Support Employers can access consultancy services providing guidance on supporting individuals with health problems or special needs in the workplace.
- Monetary Incentives for Hiring Persons with Disabilities Employers hiring those with reduced capacity may get social tax reimbursements, promoting diversity.





Major Findings

Key considerations for students going into labour market

1 Supportive infrastructure

Estonia's VET settings have dedicated staff like social pedagogues and psychologists to assists students with disabilities together with fairly easy access to diagnosing disabilities.

2 Lifelong learning

Estonia's VET sector not only has a reputation for high quality education, it is also popular for people of any age to learn new skills for both work and hobbies.

3 Labour shortages

Estonia has a lack of personnel to fill all the needed support roles to assist with accommodations.

A Barrier persists

Minorities and immigrants who do not speak Estonian have a more challenging time accessing education and services, and thus have higher unemployment rates.

Main findings Greece National report Key considerations for employers.

and policy formulation.









Limited collaboration and support

Insufficient awareness and data

Greece lacks comprehensive literature

and empirical data on neurodiversity

Lack of direct partnerships between VET institutions, industry stakeholders, and support organizations, impacting the effectiveness of inclusivity initiatives.

in VET settings, hindering accurate assessment

Mixed effectiveness of policies Greece's policies for Dys learners' Workforce transition raise concerns about their effectiveness and impact, given uncertainties surrounding their implementation.



Major Findings Challenges and Solutions for Inclusive Education and Employment

Challenges and Solutions for Inclusive Education and Employment

Existing policies fall short in effectively integrating neurodivergent individuals into education and employment, necessitating improved strategies and research.

1	Ineffective Implementation of Inclusive Education Policies
2	Challenges in Accessing Quality Education
3	Lack of Information on Employability
4	Underrepresentation and Employment Challenges
5	Need for better strategies & research in in inclusive education & employment

Main findings Ireland National report

Key considerations for employers.

- Legal obligations to support Dys workers Strictly follow laws like the Employment Equality Act for fair treatment of Dys workers.
- Providing reasonable accommodationsOffer accommodations like flexible work arrangementsor assistive technology.
- Challenges in disclosure and stigma Ensure Dys workers feel safe disclosing their condition, free from stigma.
- Access to support services Provide resources like training or support groups for Dys workers.



Major Findings Key considerations for students going into Labour market

- (1) Legal Protections for Dys Workers The Employment Equality Act 1998 in Ireland ensures to dyslexic workers access to job opportunities, training, promotions, and recourse in case of discrimination based on their learning needs.
- Provide a state of a state of a state of the state of

As such, dyslexic workers are afforded the same legal protections as individuals with other disabilities.

Comprehensive Employment Strategy Dys workers are considered key stakeholders in the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities 2015–2024 in Ireland. This strategy emphasizes the importance of building the capacities and skills of workers with disabilities to fully engage in the workplace.

Supportive Public Services and Entitlements The Citizens' Information Service and Website offer comprehensive information on public services and entitlements provided by the Irish Government to dys workers.

Main findings Italy National report



Combatting Stereotypes in Education Addressing outdated views of low-level training for DYS students.



Legislative Recognition and Support Legislation gaps in acknowledging DYS disorders' impact on employment.



Data Deficiency in Labour Market

Lack of comprehensive data and inclusive approaches hindering support.



Implementing Inclusive Policies

Importance of policies considering DYS specifics for workplace inclusivity.



Major Findings

General Workplace Challenges

Outside of specialized settings, there is often a lack of preparedness and strategy for including colleagues with SLDs. Most workplaces do not have institutionalized mechanisms for support, and accommodations are usually made ad hoc if they are made at all.

Provision of Free Career Guidance and Counseling

Job Placement Support and Awareness Initiatives

Increase in Public Diagnostic Centers Lack of Structured Inclusion Policies in Italy

Need for Common Practices Supporting Professional Success

Overcoming Prejudices and **Simplistic Visions**

Common Challenges

Policy Implementation Gap

Despite the existence of laws and policies aimed at promoting inclusion, their effective implementation falls short, leading to inadequate support for neurodivergent individuals.

Limited Access to Quality Education

Neurodivergent individuals face challenges in accessing auality education despite the presence of special educators and inclusive practices in classrooms.

Underrepresentation in the Labour Market

Neurodivergent individuals are significantly underrepresented in the labour market, indicating weak policies, lack of encouragement, and minimal engagement in employment.



Low-skilled Employment and Wage Disparities

Those who manage to find employment often end up in low-skilled positions with minimal wages, exposing them to higher risks of poverty, social exclusion and isolation.

Data and Information Gaps

Existing information on the employability of neurodivergent individuals is scarce and outdated, highlighting a need for more research and updated data.

Other common challenges:

- 1. Lack of Structured Support Services.
- 2. Challenges in Identifying Rights Violations.
- 3. Limited Resources and Reach.
- 4. Educational and Legislative Deficiencies.



VET graduation specialty vs. job placement

Greece:

Challenges in Vocational Training Outcomes

Studies on vocational training outcomes in Greece reveal that the anticipated outcomes have not been achieved. The transition from vocational education and training (VET) to employment lacks clear linkage, and there is a notable lack of job retention.

Ireland:
 Enrollment
 and
 Employment
 Status of
 Learners with
 Disabilities

66 Data from Solas, the Irish State Agency overseeing the Further Education and Training (FET) sector, shows that a significant number of learners with disabilities were enrolled in VET programmes in 2021. However, many of these learners reported being unemployed or economically inactive prior to enrollment.

کبِّ Italy: Regional Variations in Data Collection

🕌 In Italy, data regarding VET graduation specialty versus job placement are not available at the national level. **Regional education** institutions collect some information, but differences in data collection methods arise due to concurrent legislative power among regions.

Career Orientation and Field of Work in Belgium In Belgium, there is limited data on how often VET graduates work in fields unrelated to their specialty. While graduates typically find jobs related to their specialty, career orientation changes may occur. However, specific data on career changes post-graduation are lacking.

Challenges in Employment Seeking for VET Learners in Estonia

Estonia's VET sector is known for providing high-quality education, but studies show that less than 50% of VET learners seek work in their studied profession.

Several factors contribute to this, including learners pursuing vocational training as a hobby, seasonal nature of some professions, and age-related biases in certain fields like programming. These challenges highlight the complexities in transitioning from VET to employment in Estonia.

Main Gaps in neurodiversity support across countries

Greece faces scarce literature and collaboration, while Ireland encounters barriers to support access for Dys learners.

Estonia struggles with accessibility challenges, and Italy experiences limited literature and training.

Belgium lacks sufficient data and support measures.

These disparities highlight the need for enhanced efforts to address neurodiversity in vocational education and training settings globally.

Main findings Interviews With Workers

National interviews across partner countries aim to assess inclusion policies and practices, identifying best practices and gaps to support individuals with learning disorders in employment. Outcomes are categorized by participants (employers, experts/VET staff, individuals with dys-disorders) and documented in detailed reports and interview transcripts accessible within the project's files.

- 1 Lack of Specific Support in the Workplace Workers with SLDs report not benefiting from specific support practices or strategies in their workplaces, despite recognizing their potential usefulness.
- 2 Fear of Disclosure and Stigma There's a prevalent fear among workers with SLDs about disclosing their disorder to employers, fearing potential misunderstandings and feeling deficient, which affects their self-esteem.



3 Challenges in First Work Experiences Narratives regarding internships and initial work experiences highlight the absence of logistical, communicative, and emotional support for workers with SLDs, leading to dissatisfaction and emotional strain.

Dependency on Context

The support available to workers with SLDs heavily depends on the context, with experiences varying widely between different workplaces and industries.

5 Emotional Impact Workers with SLDs express emotional challenges and stress related to the lack of support in the workplace, which can affect their overall well-being and job satisfaction.

With Employers



Variability in support Accommodation Practices

Importance of Clear Communication





Limited Awareness and Implementation



2

Need for Further Support and Training



Emotional Impact of Workplace Environment

The lack of specific support in the workplace can have a significant emotional impact on workers with SLDs, leading to concerns about disclosure and fears of being perceived as weak and limited by colleagues.

- Concerns about disclosure
- Perception of colleagues
- Fear of career advancement limits



3

Protocols and Strategies

- Belgium Workplace Inclusion Strategies: Employers prioritize worker well-being with strategies like clear communication, flexible work methods, and digital tools, though adoption varies.
- Belgium Educational Support Disparities: Educational institutions in Belgium vary in their support for students with learning disorders, with some prioritizing accommodation and others facing challenges like lack of diagnosis and communication.

Estonia: Employer Perspectives on Disability Accommodations Estonian employers exhibit varying experiences and understanding of disability accommodations, emphasizing individualized approaches and a need for comprehensive guidance systems.

Italy – Workplace Accommodation Challenges: Italian employers lack formal mechanisms for accommodating workers with learning disorders, highlighting the need for awareness, support, and flexible work

environments.

- Greece Accommodating Dys Workers: Greek employers face challenges in understanding and accommodating workers with Dys disorders, emphasizing the importance of awareness, flexibility, and supportive environments.
- Ireland Encouraging Continuous Upskilling: Employers should prioritize ongoing training to match workers' needs and interests with job opportunities, fostering a culture of learning and growth.

OVERVIEW

Best Practices Collection

Best practices for Dys disorders in the workplace include tailored systems, extra time, understanding, and organizational support, fostering success and satisfaction.



Providing free career guidance, counseling and specialized job search services



Rise awareness about frequent characteristics and strengths such as creativity, listening ability, resilience and intuition.



Ensure access to tools and adaptations throughout the professional.







Inclusive Policies and Support in Belgium



Comprehensive Employment Strategies in Ireland



Lifelong Learning and Support in Estonia



Comprehensive Support and Advocacy by AID (Italian Dyslexia Association)



Strengthening Legal Framework and Institutional Support for Dys Learners in VET Settings in Greece

Best Practices Findings

Greece Committee establishment

Committee establishment: The National Education and Human Resource Development Council promotes the link between education and the labour market, fostering collaboration and alignment between these sectors.



Policy

Greece Policy implementation

Creating a framework for promoting and improving VET overall, enhancing inclusivity and addressing gaps in support for learners and workers with disabilities.





Law 4386/2016

Ensuring educational institutes provide necessary support to neurodivergent students, emphasizing equal access to education and opportunities in VET settings. Legal mandate for neurodivergent student support in VET.

Ireland

Willing Able Mentoring Programme (WAM):

Employment Equality Acts 1998 to 2015:

Workplace Equipment Adaptation Grants (WEAG): Offering paid work experience to graduates with disabilities, along with support for both employees and employers, fostering inclusivity in the workplace.

Outlawing discrimination and obliging employers to make reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities, ensuring equal opportunities in employment.

Providing grants for workplace accommodations for people with disabilities, ensuring access to assistive technology and supporting their integration into the workforce.



Modern VET

a Bridge between Student and Labour Market

Integration of education with the labour market through modern Vocational Education and Training (VET) programmes

Europass Teacher Academy

The Europass Teacher Academy offers seminars throughout the EU on topics like special needs education. Their high-auality training and resources empower teachers to better support students with special needs, promoting inclusive education.

<u>Courses for students with</u> <u>special needs</u>

www.teacheracademy.eu/

europass Teacher Academy

Dyslexia@Work

Dyslexia@Work enhances dyslexic employment by training guidance consultants, HR, and public services. It promotes workplace inclusion, fostering environments where dyslexic individuals can thrive in their careers.

www.dyslexiaprojects.eu



Positive Outcomes of Supported Employment

Comprehensive Approach to Inclusivity in Workplaces

Emotional Support

Accommodate unique strengths of neurodivergents individuals

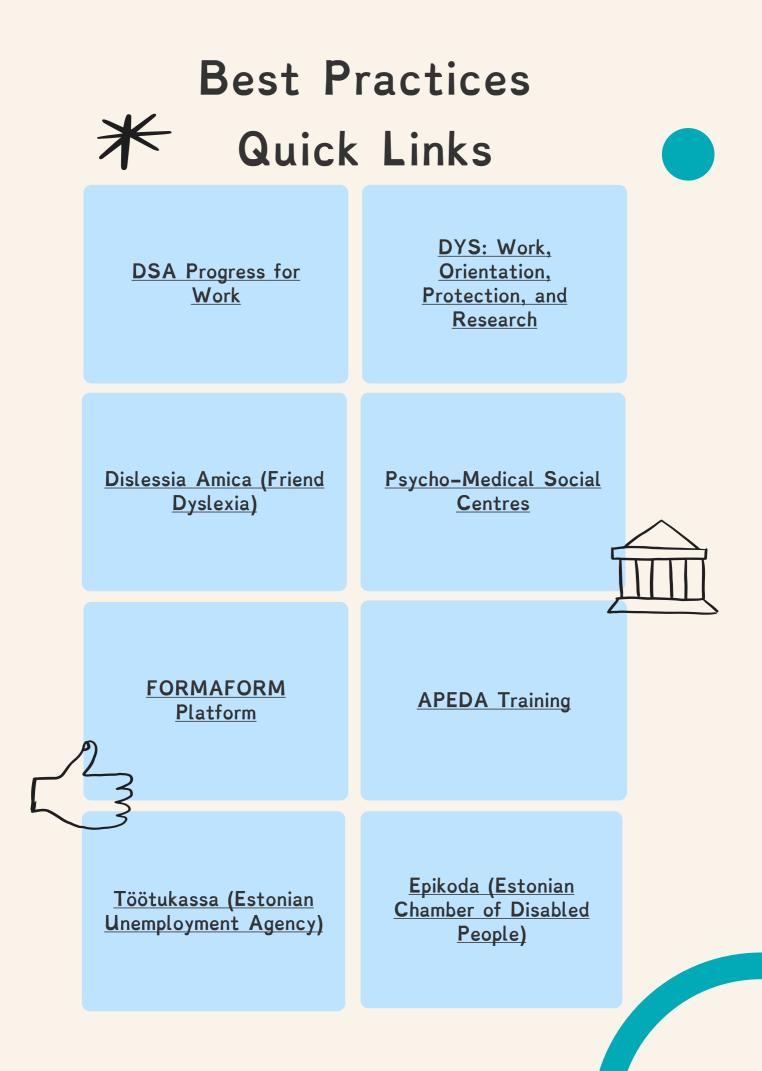
Guidance

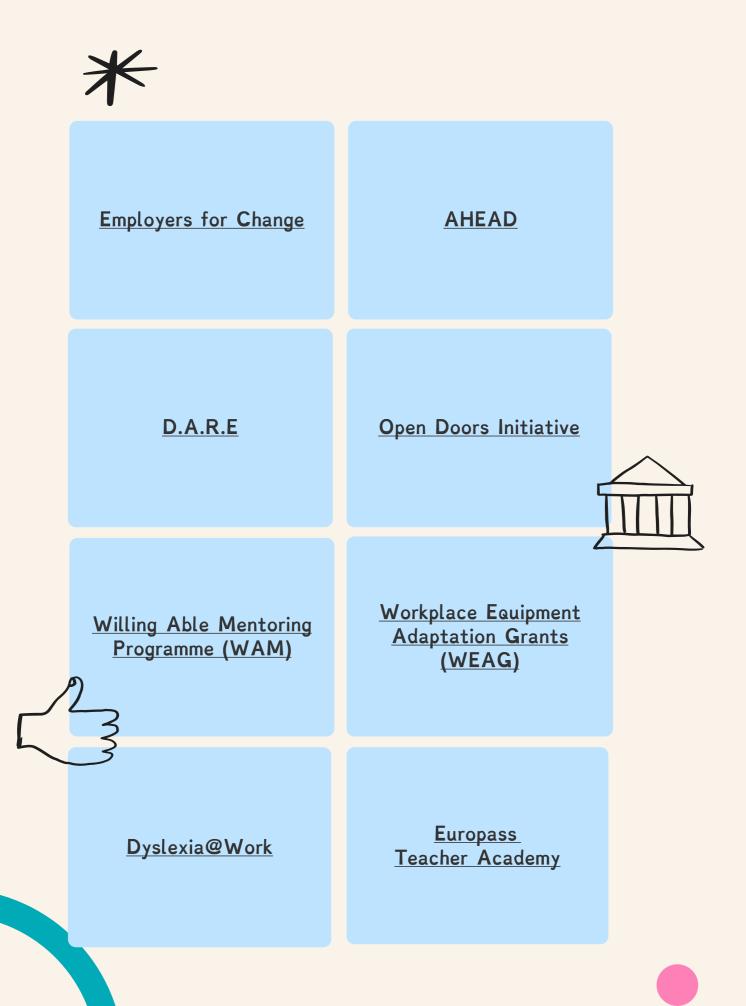
Providing guidance for negotiating conditions

Employment settings

A holistic approach to create inclusive workplaces that favorable working value neurodivergent individuals







Main findings European Policies

European Disability Strategy 2021-2030

Union of Equality Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030

S European Disability Strategy 2021–2030 The European Disability Strategy provides a comprehensive framework for member states to ensure accessibility, social inclusion, and equal opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

By setting priorities and implementing actions across various domains, including education and employment, the strategy promotes inclusivity and diversity, fostering a more equitable society for all.

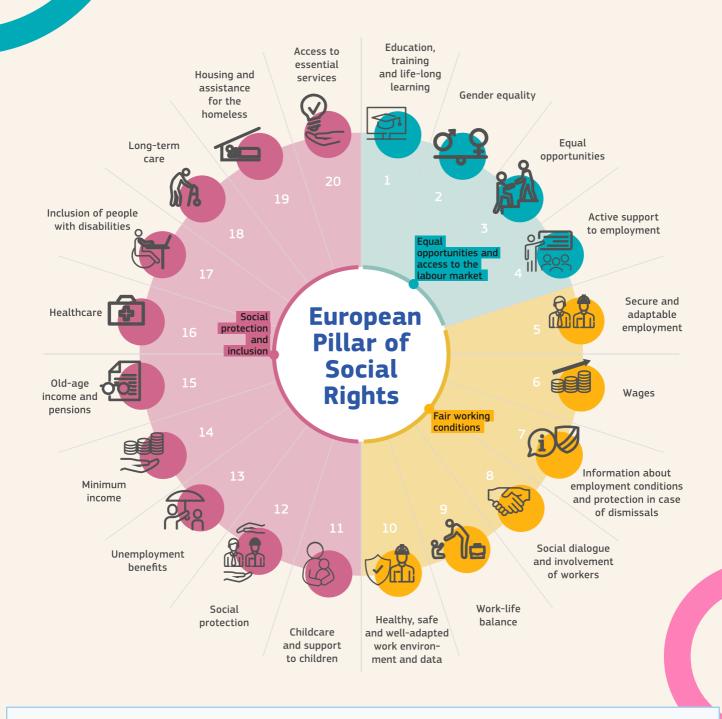
European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education



https://www.european-agency.org/

The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education is responsible for the development and promotion of inclusive education and support the workers with special needs. It provides expertise, resources, and facilitates collaboration among member states to enhance educational opportunities and outcomes.

European Pillar of Social Rights



European Pillar of Social Rights

https://op.europa.eu/webpub/empl/european-pillar-of-social-rights/en/

The European Pillar of Social Rights is a framework by the European Union to support fair and well-functioning labour markets and welfare systems, ensuring rights related to jobs, education, and social protection.

Tips for DYS Employees

When job searching, DYS students and workers should emphasize their unique skills and abilities on resumes and in interviews, showcasing their potential contributions to prospective employers.



- 2. Clear Communication
- 3. Use Assistive Technology
- 4. Establish Routine
- 5. Set Priorities
- 6. Take Breaks
- 7. Seek Feedback
- 8. Disclosure to receive support
- 9. Manage Stress
- 10. Continuous Learning

 Use of Technology: Emphasize the importance of using supportive technology like text-to-speech software to assist with reading and writing tasks at work.

Organizational Tools: Implement organizational tools and strategies like structured task and time management systems to handle workplace demands more effectively.

Regular Meetings and Feedback:

> Engage in regular meetings and seek repetitive feedback to ensure that accommodations are meeting your needs and to stay aligned with team goals. Periodically assess your work methods and accommodations to determine what is effective and what might need adjustment.

Flexible Work Modalities: Ask for flexibility in work hours and the use of necessary tools to complete tasks.

Workplace Disclosure: Sharing your diagnosis with employers, supervisors and trusted colleagues can lead to better understanding and more personalized support at work.

Personalized Strategy
 Development:
 Develop personal
 strategies that cater
 to individual needs
 and preferences, such as
 using graphic organizers
 or voice dictation instead
 of traditional note-taking
 methods. Engage in
 training programmes that
 accommodate your learning
 style or which can be more
 effective for Dys
 individuals.

Main findings Tips for Employers

Ensuring inclusivity and meeting the needs of people with Dys disorders is essential for creating fair and successful workplaces in today's diverse workforce.

Dys disorders present unique challenges that require tailored support and understanding from employers, policymakers, and stakeholders.

By promoting awareness, implementing reasonable accommodations, and fostering supportive workplace cultures, organizations can unlock the full potential of Dys workers and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace.

Supportive Workplace Culture

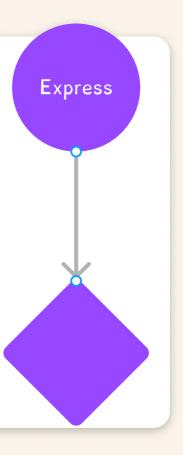
Open Communication Channels

Create an environment where Dys workers feel comfortable expressing their needs, concerns, and challenges openly, fostering trust, transparency, and collaboration among team members.



safe communication environment

Workplace





Career Development and Advancement

Skill Development Opportunities

• Offer opportunities for continuous learning, upskilling, and professional development to empower Dys workers to enhance their skills and advance in their careers.

Mentorship and Coaching Programs

• Establish mentorship and coaching programs to provide guidance, support, and encouragement to Dys workers, helping them navigate challenges and achieve their career goals.

Recognition and Promotion

 Recognize the contributions and achievements of Dys workers through awards, promotions, and career advancement opportunities, fostering a sense of belonging and motivation in the workplace.

Creating Inclusive Work Environments



Conflict Resolution Mechanisms

Implement effective conflict resolution mechanisms and grievance procedures to address any issues or conflicts that may arise in the workplace, ensuring a harmonious and inclusive work environment.



Workplace



Encourage Disclosure

Create a supportive environment where employees feel comfortable disclosing their Dys disorders, allowing for appropriate accommodations and support to be provided.

Worker



Supportive Workplace Practices





Make necessary adjustments to tasks, work environment, or processes to accommodate the needs of employees with Dys disorders, promoting equal opportunities for all.





Offer Counseling and Support Services



Provide access to counseling and support services for employees with Dys disorders, addressing any mental health concerns and offering guidance on navigating challenges in the workplace.





Raise Awareness



Educate all employees about Dys disorders to foster understanding, empathy, and a more inclusive work culture.





Ensure Equal Opportunities

Ensure that individuals with Dys disorders have equal access to career advancement opportunities, promotions, and training programmes within the organization. Workplace



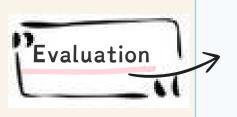
Establish Support Networks



Equality

Facilitate the creation of support networks or employee resource groups for individuals with Dys disorders, allowing them to connect with peers and share experiences. Workplace





Continuously assess the effectiveness of accommodations provided to employees with Dys disorders and make adjustments as needed to ensure their success and well-being in the workplace. Workplace



Promote Flexibility

Offer flexible work arrangements or scheduling options to accommodate the diverse needs of employees with Dys disorders, allowing them to better manage their workload and maintain work-life balance. Employer



Lead by Example

Demonstrate leadership commitment to inclusivity and diversity by championing initiatives that support employees with Dys disorders and fostering a culture of acceptance and respect for all individuals.

Employer



Flexibility

Model



Provide Accessible Training

Offer training programmes that are tailored to the needs of individuals with Dys disorders, ensuring they have the necessary skills and support to succeed in the workplace. Employer

External Partnerships and Resources

Collaboration with

Disability Organizations Partner with disability organizations and supporting groups to access resources, support services, and best practices for accommodating Dys workers and promoting inclusion in the workplace.



Government Support Programmes

Leverage government support programmes and initiatives aimed at promoting the employment of individuals with disabilities, such as job placement services, tax incentives, and grants for workplace accommodations.



Community Engagement and Outreach

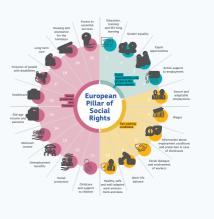
Engage with the local community and stakeholders to raise awareness about Dys disorders, share success stories, and advocate for greater inclusion and support for Dys workers in the broader society.



Legal Frameworks and Policy Initiatives

European Pillar for Social Rights

Embrace EU initiatives like the European Pillar for Social Rights to create inclusive environments for individuals with Dys disorders. Policy



National Policy Development

Develop and implement national policies like those in Greece and Belgium to facilitate the transition of Dys learners from education to the labour market.



Vocational Training Programmes

Establish specialized vocational training programmes, similar to those in Belgium, tailored to meet the needs of Dys learners and enhance their employability.





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