

Disability Awareness: Adaptive Skills

Est. Time: 6 Weeks

Objective

Gain a better understanding of the challenges that individuals with disabilities experience with adaptive skills as well as the supports that can be provided to address these challenges.

Overview

Adaptive skills are the basic competencies required to meet daily living needs and function independently. These skills include self-care, communication, self-direction, social skills, leisure skills, home or school living, functional academics, work, and health and safety. Some individuals with disabilities, such as those with intellectual disabilities or multiple disabilities, may experience challenges because of their limited adaptive skills. Educators can better understand these challenges and the need for supports if they have experienced them firsthand or have worked with individuals who face such challenges.

Activity

Identify an organization that provides services to individuals with disabilities. Volunteer at least 15 hours with the organization. These hours must be spread over a six-week period to help you develop a deeper relationship with the organization. Your volunteer work must also include direct contact with individuals with disabilities who receive support through the organization. When you have completed your volunteer experience, complete the following.

1. Provide a list of your contact hours signed by the organization contact person.
2. Write a five-page paper reflecting on your experiences. Be sure to include:
 - a. Details about the organization (e.g., name, mission, who the organization serves)
 - b. A summary of your volunteer experience. This description should include:
 - i. Information about your role
 - ii. How your experience differed from what you expected
 - iii. The most difficult and satisfying parts of your experience
 - c. An analysis of your volunteer experience. Be sure to include information on:
 - i. The specific adaptive needs of the individuals with disabilities
 - ii. The structures that were in place to support the adaptive needs of individuals with disabilities
 - iii. Who or what made the strongest impression on you and how so
 - d. A discussion of the impact of the volunteer experience. Be sure to describe:
 - i. How you will use what you learned from this experience to support students
 - ii. Whether (and how) your views changed regarding the abilities of people with disabilities
 - iii. Anything you would like to learn more about