

Pathways to Competitive Integrated Employment

Tim B.'s Story

Meet Tim, a 61-year-old single man with an extensive work history. Over ten years ago, he transitioned from a sheltered workshop to community employment, driven by his desire for a more integrated work experience.

With the support of Vocational Rehabilitation, Tim chose an agency that offered the support of a job coach who helped him apply for and secure a job.

Background

Tim's first job in the community was with FedEx, where he thrived and enjoyed his tasks. In this role, he gained valuable skills like time management and collaboration with coworkers. After ten successful years, Tim sought a less physically demanding job with fewer hours due to declining health.

Tim decided to leave FedEx before securing another position. He worked closely with a job coach to continue his job search and eventually



obtained a part-time janitorial position at the YMCA.

Finding Purpose at the YMCA

Tim takes pride in living independently and driving his own car, but he acknowledges the need for support on his path to success. With the help of his job coach, Whisper, Tim applied for and secured the YMCA position. He completed orientation classes and passed the required test with Whisper's assistance in preparing, taking notes, and studying.

As Tim settled into his new role, Whisper helped him navigate his work environment and establish a routine. His duties include cleaning the gym, restrooms, elevators, and locker rooms. Tim has formed connections with his

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coworkers, enhancing his sense of support and inclusion at work.

To ensure long-term support outside the workplace, Tim utilizes a behavioralist who visits weekly and is available for questions. Initially working 15 hours a week, Tim has increased his hours to 20 per week, adding an extra day to his schedule due to these supports.

Navigating Challenges

Accepting the need for a less physically demanding job was challenging for Tim. After leaving FedEx, he experienced a stressful waiting period before hearing back from the YMCA. Once hired, Tim faced new challenges, including computerized orientation and training. Whisper guided him through the software, ensuring he understood and answered questions correctly. This training has been instrumental in Tim's success at the YMCA, where he reports positive experiences.

Tim aims for a stable future with the YMCA, striving to be a consistent and dependable employee. His work ethic, developed at FedEx, has translated well to his current role.

Before working at FedEx, Tim tried various restaurant jobs but found himself easily distracted by customers. This insight helps job coaches understand that Tim works best independently but benefits from brief social interactions. Tim's story highlights the importance of understanding the interests,

preferences, and needs of individuals with disabilities when assisting them in finding employment.

Since 2023, Tim has been a proud YMCA employee. His work ethic, developed at FedEx, has carried over to his new role. Tim's story exemplifies the significance of obtaining and maintaining employment for personal fulfillment and independence.

Ingredients for Success

- **Pause for Change:** Recognizing his declining health, Tim sought a job that better fit his changing capabilities. With support, he left FedEx to focus on his health and securing a new job. This belief in his goals enabled his success at the YMCA.
- **Long-term Success:** Success varies for everyone. Tim's goal wasn't to climb the career ladder but rather to find a job suited to his capabilities. His loyalty to his employers demonstrates the importance of respecting individual choices. Without support, Tim might have felt pressured to overextend himself, impacting his job satisfaction.
- **Job Meets Personality:** Understanding Tim's need for brief social interactions at work was crucial in finding the right job fit. This acceptance allowed Tim to build confidence in his job tasks and overall work experience.

Words of Wisdom

When asked for advice for those considering community employment, Tim emphasizes the importance of identifying personal goals and interests. He encourages family members to support these goals, stressing that job choices should align with individual interests.



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