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Functional Impacts and Accommodation Matrix: A guide for employers

This matrix provides examples of how disabilities can affect human functioning and offers suggestions for related workplace accommodations. It is intended as a guide and does not encompass all functional impacts and all workplace environments for which improvement in accessibility may be necessary.

Tips for Determining Accommodations

- Determining accommodations should be done on a case-by-case basis as no two individuals living with disabilities are exactly alike in ability or need for accommodations.
- Remove as many environmental barriers as possible and minimize social barriers by reducing stigma and creating a safe space for people with disabilities to disclose.
- Remember, not everyone who has been diagnosed with temporary or on-going health condition identifies with the term disability and may not be aware that they are eligible for accommodations.
- Take into consideration the person's strengths and whether an adjustment to the distribution of duties could be a way to mitigate functional impacts while still getting the essential requirements of the job done.
- If an employee requires a professional interaction plan*, make sure to include the employee in the process so that they can provide input and set attainable goals.
- If you require assistance determining accommodations with your employee, TRU's Accessibility Experiential Learning Coordinator at 250-828-5138 or check out other resources for determining accommodations on the CEL Experience More Access Website (currently under construction).
- If you think the employee could cause harm to themselves or others, call a first responder such as RCMP for assistance.

***Professional Interaction Plan:** A formal or informal plan developed in collaboration with the employee to facilitate positive communication and find ways to accommodate different communication styles that may be related to disability. This collaboration provides an opportunity for the employee to express how they best learn and communicate and for the employer to provide guidance on the company's cultural and professional interaction protocols.

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FUNCTIONAL IMPACT	ACCOMMODATION	RATIONALE
Behavioural Functioning		
Disruptive Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional interaction plan (discuss with employee) 	<p>If a person is demonstrating disruptive behaviour related to their disability, try speaking the person privately to determine what may be triggering the behaviour and what can be done to reduce the impact. Find out how to communicate with each other more effectively and set some achievable goals with the person. If behaviour continues to be disruptive after attempts to accommodate have been exhausted, consult with your designated human resources officer or policy for next steps. You may also want to get legal counsel before you make any final decisions.</p>
Social interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional interaction plan (discuss this with employee) 	<p>A person who has difficulty with social interaction may want their employer to know how to better work with them. Try speaking to the person privately to find out what to expect and how to make sure you understand the best way to communicate with each other.</p>
Cognitive Functioning		
Organization & Time Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mind mapping software • Organizational and time management software • Webinar on strategies 	<p>People who have difficulty with organization and time management may find some types of software helpful. They may also benefit from taking a webinar or workshop on organization and time management strategies.</p>
Focus & Concentration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternate format (PDF) • Screen reader • Speech to text software • Distraction reduced environment • Ear plugs • Noise cancelling headphones 	<p>People who have difficulties with focus and concentration may need tools to help them stay on task. For example, alternate format and a screen reader can help some people better focus on reading directions and</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stretch breaks • Fidget toys (fidget spinner, fidget cube) • C-pen • Flexible work schedule 	instructions. Environments and tools that help minimize distractions can also be helpful.
Chronic Fatigue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternate format (PDF) • Flexible work schedule • Afternoon start time • Rest breaks 	A flexible schedule may support a person with chronic fatigue to be their most productive depending on what time of day the fatigue has the most impact.
Memory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mind mapping software • Organizational software • Recording device • Reminder software • Notepad • Calendar • Cueing sheets 	Tools that keep record of dates, times, activities and appointments can support people with memory issues. An employer may also need to repeat a direction or instruction more than once. A webinar or workshop on memory strategies may also be helpful.
Mental Health Functioning		
Stress management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellness breaks • Distraction reduced environment • Webinar on strategies • EAP Counselling 	People who experience extreme stress on a regular basis may require more frequent breaks and a place to go to decompress. They may also benefit from taking a webinar or workshop on stress management strategies.
Anger management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional interaction plan (discuss with employee) • Webinar on strategies • EAP Counselling 	If a person experiences issues with anger management, try meeting with them privately to discuss how you can best work together. The person may also benefit from taking a workshop or webinar on anger management strategies.
Panic Attacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellness break • EAP Counselling • Space to lay down 	A person who experiences panic attacks may need a break to de-escalate and rest. Panic attacks can be exhausting. Access to an employment assistance plan counsellor may also be helpful.

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Social anxiety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional interaction plan • Individual work space • EAP Counselling • Wellness breaks • Job sharing/shifting duties 	A person who experiences social anxiety may work best alone or in a more private work space. If a person has difficulty with public speaking, sharing or shifting job duties may reduce the severity of this impact.
Mood difficulties (anxiety/depression)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option to work from home • Flexible work schedule • EAP Counselling 	A person who experiences mood swings may find working from home more productive and being in a safe environment may minimize triggers. A flexible work schedule may also be helpful if the employee has an opportunity to practice self-care at times of the day when impacts are greater.
Sensory Functioning		
Hearing loss/Deafness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FM System • Closed Captioning • CART • Transcription • Note taking • FM Pen 	Depending on the degree of hearing loss, tools and technology that amplify or allow the person to read visual content may be helpful. Assistive devices such as hearing aids are usually covered by the person's medical plan.
Low Vision/Blindness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JAWs technology • Speech to text technology • Text to speech technology • Reader/Scribe • Braille 	There are a variety of technologies and tools available for person who is blind or has low vision. The accommodations provided will depend on the degree of vision loss. Glasses are usually covered by the person's medical plan.
Ringling in ears	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music • Sounds software 	When a person experiences ringing in their ears sometimes music or sound software that counteracts the ringing can help reduce this impact.
Physical Functioning		
Headaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soft lighting • Screen overlay 	Headaches can be a symptom of many types of disabilities such as migraines, concussions or

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiet space 	<p>acquired brain injuries. Sometimes soft lighting, a coloured screen overly and a quiet space will help relieve symptoms.</p>
Dizziness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soft lighting • Screen overlay • Wellness breaks • A stool/chair nearby • A space to lay down for a short period 	<p>People who experience dizziness may find reducing brightness helpful as well as taking wellness breaks to let the dizziness pass.</p>
Balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open space • Nearby stool or chair • Railings 	<p>If balance is affected, assessing the environment and work space for safety may help mitigate injuries.</p>
Chronic Fatigue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternate format (PDF) • Flexible work schedule • Afternoon start time • Rest breaks 	<p>A flexible schedule may support a person with chronic fatigue to be their most productive depending on what time of day the fatigue has the most impact. Alternate format may be helpful for people who feel less fatigue when listening to information instead of reading it.</p>
Chronic Pain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ergonomic desk • Ergonomic chair • Sit to stand desk • Ergonomic mouse and key board • Stretch breaks 	<p>An ergonomic work setting can be helpful for people who experience chronic pain as well as regular stretch breaks. Chronic pain can be a symptom of a variety of diagnosable disabilities.</p>
Muscle weakness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech to text software • Scribe • Support worker • Text to speech software • Ergonomic chair • Rest breaks • Wheelchair accessibility 	<p>Depending the degree of muscle weakness, a person may need a variety of assistive tools or a support worker to mitigate physical barriers related to movement and mobility.</p>
Sitting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ergonomic chair • Sit to Stand Desk 	<p>If a person has difficulty sitting for long periods of time, a sit to stand desk may be helpful in an</p>

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		office setting. An ergonomic chair and stretch breaks may also relieve symptoms.
Standing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ergonomic chair • Stool • Soft floor mat 	A comfortable chair, a stool nearby or a floor mat may reduce impacts on knees and joints.
Lifting/Carrying/Reaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistive equipment • Job sharing/shifting duties 	Tools such as dollies, trollies or devices used to lift items/people may help reduce this impact; If possible, share or shift job duties among employees.
Grasping/Gripping/Dexterity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keyboarding • Speech to text • Tool/device used to grasp items 	Impacts to dexterity may be reduced by an option to use a keyboard on speech to text software.
Keyboarding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech to text • Handwriting • Tablet with handwriting to text capability 	If keyboarding is impacted, handwriting information, speech to text software or a tablet that can convert handwriting to text may be helpful.
Walking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wheelchair accessibility • Height adjustable desk • Rest breaks • Proximity to washroom • Cane/walker 	Depending on the degree of impact on mobility, a person may be in a wheelchair, using crutches, canes or other devices to support them with walking. A height adjustable desk may be helpful for someone in a wheelchair that may not fit under a standard desk height.
Allergic reaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scent free or reduced environment • Disinfectant wipes • Removal of allergens • Approval of epi-pen on hand 	Try creating a scent-free or scent reduced environment for people who are sensitive or allergic to scent. Depending on the allergen, making sure the person’s work space is disinfected clean may avoid an allergic reaction.
Ambulation/other mobility issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option to work from home • Proximity to washroom • Skype capability • Mobility arrangements in the office 	Flexibility in work environment if the person has difficulty leaving their home due to mobility issues.

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Communication Functioning		
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternate format (PDF) • Screen reader • C-pen 	Assistive technology tools such as a screen reader that reads PDF files out loud may support someone who experiences difficulties with reading.
Handwriting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech to text • Keyboard 	Assistive technology tools that allow people to dictate their thoughts into text could support someone who has difficulty handwriting or keyboarding. Depending on the person’s disability, keyboarding could also be an accommodation if handwriting is a barrier.
Speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing • Custom assistive technology • Support worker/assistant • Keyboarding 	A person who has difficulty verbalizing their thoughts or is unable to speak may need to communicate in writing or use assistive technology specific to the degree of the impact. They may also require a support worker to help with communication.
Mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calculator • Spreadsheet • Laptop/Computer 	Some people have difficulty with mathematical equations and logic. If an employee is required to work with numbers, they may need a calculation device or software for support with this impact.
Processing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More time to learn tasks • More time to ask questions or explain information • Alternate format (PDF) • Screen reader • Task list • Procedures well explained and available in written format. 	There are a variety of disabilities that can cause impacts to processing information. People who have difficulties with processing may need more time to understand or explain information. Depending on how the person learns, presenting the information in different formats may reduce the degree of this impact.

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Resources

Just a few we thought you might find helpful

Physiotherapy:

[Kinetic Energy](#)

[Kamloops Physiotherapy and Sports Injury](#)

[North Kamloops Physiotherapy](#)

[Thompson Rivers Physiotherapy](#)

[Resolve Health](#)

Occupational Therapy:

[Seasons Consulting](#)

[Creative Therapy Consultants](#)

Mental Health:

[Kamloops Mental Health and Substance Use](#)

[Canadian Mental Health Association](#)

Counselling:

[Centre for Response-Based Practice](#)

Assistive Technology:

[Work BC Assistive Technology Services](#) – see eligibility guidelines on Work BC website

[TRU Career & Experiential Learning](#) – contact for eligibility to access services through TRU Accessibility Services

Subsidies & Funding Options

[Work BC Resources](#)