

WORKPLACE SOCIALIZATION SCENARIO

LIMEBERRY LUMBER

You recently placed two clients into similar positions at the same company. Both are working as stock clerks for Limeberry Lumber. As a stock clerk both clients are required to:

- Receive and count stock items (e.g. lumber, tools, etc.) and record manually or using a computer
- Pack and unpack items to be stocked on the shelves in the warehouse
- Verify inventory computations by comparing them to physical counts of stock, and investigate discrepancies or adjust errors
- Mark stock items by using identification tags, and electric marking tools
- Keep records on the use and/or damage of stock or stock handling equipment
- Examine and inspect stock items for wear or defects, reporting any damage to the supervisor
- Provide assistance or direction to other stockroom & warehouse workers

You receive a call from the store manager saying that he is having difficulty with one of the new hires. The manager explains to you that this individual is able to perform the essential functions of the job but is having difficulty fitting in to the way things are done around there. He wishes to meet with you to discuss.

The two clients are:

Sara Jenkins

Sara is a 31-year old woman who has 5 years of experience working as a stock clerk at Home Depot in Hempstead, New York. Prior to her stock clerk experience, she worked as a cashier at Target. Both of her previous employers report that Sara was a hard worker, a multi-tasker, and well liked by her coworkers and the customers. Sara recently experienced her first episode of clinical depression, which resulted in two suicidal attempts. In addition, since the first suicidal attempt, Sara has been unemployed for 2 years. Currently, she is seeing a psychiatrist for medication management and a psychologist for therapy. Her treatment plan has reduced the degree of depressive symptoms significantly but Sara has lost some confidence in her ability to work and occasionally feels like she has to push herself to get through the day. She worries that the

symptoms will return and how people may perceive her if they know about her depression. Nevertheless, Sara is relatively social towards others and takes initiative to get the job done. With your assistance, Sara reentered the workforce 3 months ago taking a job at Limeberry Lumber as a stock clerk in the painting department.

While working with Sara, you felt she would be a suitable fit at Limeberry Lumber because of her expressed values and previous experience as a stock clerk. In your professional opinion, Sara had sufficient knowledge, skill, and ability to perform the job. In terms of values, she has a great degree of pride and enthusiasm about working because she feels she is being productive. As a result, she enjoys performing her best and being rewarded for her accomplishments. Although Sara has lost some confidence she generally feels better when working in an environment where employees are allowed some individual choice in the way they work. Although it has been somewhat more difficult for her since having the depression, Sara tries to take initiative when needing information about how to do the job and greatly values having a mentor in her new job. In concert with her supervisor, Sara elected to withhold telling her coworkers about her disability for concern of the impact it might have on her adjustment into the job.

Jackie Lewis

Jackie is a 28-old woman who worked at Lowes in Clifton, New Jersey for 6 years. Starting as a stock clerk in the garden and lawn department, she worked as a stock clerk and then moved into a supervisory position within two years of her hire date. Lowes reported that Jackie was an excellent worker who was on the cusp of receiving another promotion at the time of her accident. She was extremely organized, efficient, a self-starter, and “social butterfly.” Prior to Lowes, she held odd jobs as a waitress, cashier, and receptionist. Approximately one year ago, Jackie was in an auto accident and acquired a mild brain injury, which lead to her moving back home with family in Westbury, NY.

The brain injury left some mild residual effects including a decrease in short-term memory and organizational skills. She is also more reserved and requires prompting to complete tasks. You have worked with Jackie on compensatory strategies to be able to manage the residual effects. For example, she carries a notepad for memory, and she uses a task list for organization and initiation. Prior to her hire at Limeberry Lumber, Jackie demonstrated success in using these strategies.

While working with Jackie, you felt she would be a suitable candidate for the position at Limeberry Lumber because of her previous experience as a stock clerk. With use of the compensatory strategies, it was your professional opinion that she could be successful in the job. Jackie acknowledged to you that she realizes she will have to work her way back to a supervisory position again but at this point in her life, isn't sure she would desire that degree of responsibility

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again. In some ways, she doesn't mind keeping things "low key." Jackie also expressed a desire to work more independently than in a work group because of her comfort level in being around others. She feels if she just tries, she can get it on her own. Although Limeberry Lumber is promoting a team focus and mentoring program, you felt that Jackie, despite the need for more independence, would benefit from an environment with support around her. Due to the need for accommodations in the job, Jackie disclosed her disability to her supervisor and coworkers.

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Who do you think is having more difficulty?

What conflict may exist between the client and the workplace culture?

What other information would you need (e.g. artifacts) to better understand the problem?

How would you resolve this conflict?