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(CESP)**

APSE CESP

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Topic Break Down

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QUESTION NO: 1

You are doing job development in the community with an individual who has decided to disclose that he has a mental illness. In the interview, the employer begins to ask specific questions about the individual's diagnosis. Which of the following is the MOST appropriate way to proceed in this situation?

- A. Tell the employer that his questioning is illegal and educate him on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- B. Leave the meeting to convey the inappropriateness of the employer's questions.
- C. Reframe the employer's question from diagnosis to reasonable accommodations in the workplace.
- D. Tell the job-seeker to answer the questions to help you avoid looking bad in front of the employer.

ANSWER: C

Explanation:

"Reframe the employer's question from diagnosis to reasonable accommodations in the workplace." is the most appropriate response because it keeps the conversation centered on employment-related needs, the job seeker's strengths, and practical ways to perform essential job functions. A diagnosis is personal health information; it does not, by itself, establish what the person can do at work or what support may be useful. When disclosure has occurred, the employment support professional can help the job seeker maintain control over private information while facilitating a constructive discussion of any accommodation the person chooses to request.

This approach also supports informed, individualized employment planning. Rather than discussing labels or symptoms, the conversation can identify whether an accommodation is needed, describe the relevant functional need, and consider effective workplace supports. Under the ADA, disability-related inquiries and medical examinations are restricted, while employers may engage in an interactive process to address a request for reasonable accommodation. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's guidance explains these protections and the accommodation process: [EEOC guidance on disability-related inquiries](#) and [EEOC guidance on reasonable accommodation](#). This response preserves dignity, self-determination, and a focus on successful employment outcomes.

QUESTION NO: 2

Which of the following expectations is reasonable to ask from an individual's residential staff in support of the individual's employment?

- A. ensuring the individual is making friends at work
- B. calling the employer to discuss issues the employee is having at work
- C. reviewing skills learned at work and practicing tasks that might be difficult to perform
- D. supporting the individual in maintaining a clean work uniform

ANSWER: D

Explanation:

Supporting the individual in maintaining a clean work uniform is a reasonable expectation because residential staff can provide daily-living support that helps the person arrive at work prepared, while respecting the person's preferences, independence, and workplace role. Clean, appropriate clothing is a practical employment-support need: it can be addressed through ordinary home routines such as laundry access, planning when uniforms need to be washed, and ensuring the individual has clean clothing available before a shift. The expectation is not that residential staff take over the individual's responsibility; rather, staff should provide the individualized assistance, prompts, accommodations, or skill-building support identified in the person-centered plan. Effective employment support depends on coordination among the individual, employment-support professional, residential provider, family or other natural supports when appropriate, and employer, with the individual's informed consent. In this collaboration, residential staff may reinforce routines that remove barriers to work participation, such as hygiene, sleep, transportation readiness, meals, medication routines where applicable, and work-clothing preparation. This reflects the CESP role of facilitating supports that enable people with disabilities to obtain and maintain integrated, competitive employment. APSE describes CESP as a credential for professionals who support

competitive integrated employment, and its employment-first resources emphasize coordinated, person-centered supports. See [APSE CESP Certification](#) and [APSE Employment First](#).

QUESTION NO: 3

You have heard people in your community referring to people with psychiatric disabilities as "schizophrenics" and "borderlines". What do these terms indicate about an individual's capability for employment?

- A. These diagnoses can help with understanding a person's strengths and limitations, which are relevant to placing a person in employment.
- B. Psychiatric labels are not good predictors of employment type, level, or capacity.
- C. These diagnoses describe what people cannot do, such as interact well with people, or take instruction from a supervisor.
- D. These terms describe the kinds of behaviors people will have, which relates to what they will be like as workers.

ANSWER: B

Explanation:

Psychiatric labels are not good predictors of employment type, level, or capacity. A diagnosis does not determine a person's individual work interests, skills, qualifications, support needs, or ability to perform the essential functions of a particular job. Employment support should therefore be individualized and based on the person's stated goals, strengths, preferences, experiences, and the actual requirements of a job—not on assumptions associated with a psychiatric diagnosis. Person-first, respectful language also recognizes that a person is not defined by a disability or diagnosis. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, qualified applicants and employees with mental health conditions may be entitled to reasonable accommodations that enable them to perform essential job functions. Examples can include flexible scheduling, altered supervisory methods, written instructions, or leave for treatment, depending on the individual situation. The Job Accommodation Network explains that workplace accommodations should focus on functional limitations and effective solutions rather than diagnostic labels. Likewise, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission confirms that people with mental health conditions have workplace rights and may be qualified to work successfully. These principles support employment services that presume capability, avoid stigma, and evaluate each person individually. See the [Job Accommodation Network's guidance on mental health conditions](#) and the [EEOC's guidance on mental health conditions in the workplace](#).

QUESTION NO: 4

Which of the following is an example of People First Language?

- A. He is disabled.
- B. She is brain damaged.
- C. She is confined to a wheelchair.
- D. He is a person with autism.

ANSWER: D

Explanation:

"He is a person with autism." is an example of People First Language because it identifies the individual as a person before referring to a diagnosis or disability. This wording recognizes that autism is one aspect of someone's life and does not define the entirety of the individual. In employment-support settings, person-first communication reinforces dignity, respect, and the understanding that every person has unique strengths, preferences, goals, and support needs. It also helps professionals communicate in a manner consistent with individualized, person-centered services—an essential value in competitive integrated employment and effective employment support.

People First Language commonly uses constructions such as “person with,” “person who has,” or “person who uses,” when that wording reflects the individual’s preference. Language preferences are personal, however, and some people may prefer identity-first language, such as “autistic person.” The most respectful practice is to use the terminology an individual chooses for themselves. When a preference is not known, person-first wording such as “person with autism” is a respectful default that avoids reducing a person to a condition. The CDC provides guidance for respectful disability communication at [CDC: Communicating With and About People with Disabilities](#), and NIH discusses respectful person-first and identity-first terminology at [NIH: Writing Respectfully](#).

QUESTION NO: 5

Which of the following is the LEAST effective way for a family to support a job seeker in obtaining competitive employment?

- A. Providing the employment support professional with information about her job history
- B. Providing the employment support professional with pertinent information about her disability
- C. Attending job interviews and new employer orientation sessions to learn more about the job and hiring procedures
- D. Assisting her to identify her interests and vocational strengths

ANSWER: C

Explanation:

Attending job interviews and new employer orientation sessions to learn more about the job and hiring procedures is the least effective family-support strategy because competitive integrated employment should be directed by the job seeker’s own goals, choices, communication, and relationship with the employer. Family members can be valuable partners in employment planning when they share information at the job seeker’s request, help identify strengths and interests, and encourage informed decision-making. However, interviews and orientation are important opportunities for the candidate to present themselves as the prospective employee, ask questions, learn workplace expectations, and begin building an independent professional relationship with the employer. A family member’s attendance may unintentionally shift the employer’s focus away from the candidate, limit the candidate’s opportunity to self-advocate, or create an impression that the candidate cannot participate independently. The employment support professional should use person-centered practices, obtain the job seeker’s consent before involving family, and identify accommodations or support strategies that preserve the individual’s control and privacy. This approach is consistent with the CESP emphasis on supporting informed choice, self-determination, and competitive integrated employment. See APSE’s [CESP credentialing resources](#) and the U.S. Department of Labor’s [guidance on customized employment](#).

QUESTION NO: 6

In order to become more familiar with a job seeker's daily routine and environment, an employment support professional should:

- A. read the Vocational Evaluation Report.
- B. check their school records.
- C. spend time with the individual.
- D. ask their counselor.

ANSWER: C

Explanation:

“Spend time with the individual” is correct because effective employment support begins with getting to know the job seeker directly in the settings and routines that shape their everyday life. Time spent with the person provides firsthand, person-centered information about their interests, strengths, preferences, communication style, support needs, transportation patterns, relationships, and community participation. This discovery process helps the employment support professional identify conditions that may contribute to a good job match and develop supports that reflect the individual’s own goals and

lived experience. It also promotes informed choice: the job seeker is an active partner in planning rather than being understood solely through reports or information supplied by others. APSE's CESP competency framework emphasizes applying person-centered values and practices, including supporting individual choice, self-determination, and meaningful community employment. Direct interaction in natural environments is consistent with those principles and enables the professional to build a practical understanding of the person before conducting job development or providing ongoing support. See APSE's [CESP overview](#) and the [CESP Content Outline](#) for the certification's person-centered, community-employment focus.

QUESTION NO: 7

You are assisting a 30-year-old woman in an interview during which she indicates having a traumatic brain injury. The employer asks about the nature of this disability. Which of the following is your MOST appropriate response?

- A. Focus on the individual's strengths, talents, and capabilities to complete the job tasks.
- B. Excuse yourself from the interview, as the employer may not be a good match for this individual.
- C. Tell the employer that this question violates the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- D. Disclose disability information.

ANSWER: A

Explanation:

Focus on the individual's strengths, talents, and capabilities to complete the job tasks. is the most appropriate response because employment support should center on the applicant's qualifications and the essential functions of the position, rather than on diagnostic details. A traumatic brain injury can affect people differently, and a diagnosis by itself does not establish what this particular person can or cannot do at work. Redirecting the conversation to demonstrated skills, relevant experience, work preferences, and the ways the applicant can perform job duties supports a strengths-based, person-centered interview approach.

This response also respects the applicant's privacy and right to control disability-related information. When accommodation becomes relevant, the discussion can appropriately focus on functional needs and effective workplace supports, rather than unnecessary medical details. The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission explains that disability-related inquiries and medical examinations are restricted during the pre-offer stage, while employers may ask applicants whether they can perform specific job functions. Keeping the conversation job-focused helps the employment support professional advocate effectively while maintaining a constructive relationship with the employer. See the [EEOC's guidance on pre-employment disability-related questions](#) and [APSE's resources on employment support and inclusion](#).

QUESTION NO: 8

The ADA requires employers to provide reasonable accommodations such as:

- A. lower quality standards for work
- B. acquiring or modifying equipment
- C. reallocating an essential function of a job
- D. lower quantity standards for work

ANSWER: B

Explanation:

Acquiring or modifying equipment is a recognized example of a reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act. A reasonable accommodation is a change to a job, workplace, or usual work procedure that enables a qualified individual with a disability to perform the position's essential functions and to have equal access to employment opportunities. Equipment modifications can include providing assistive technology, adapting a workstation, obtaining

ergonomic tools, supplying screen-reading software, or modifying devices so that an employee can use them effectively. The appropriate accommodation is determined through an individualized, interactive process involving the employer and employee, with attention to the employee's disability-related limitations and the actual duties and environment of the job. The accommodation must be effective, though an employer is not required to provide the employee's preferred accommodation if another effective option is available. This principle supports competitive, integrated employment by focusing on practical supports that allow the individual to meet the job's fundamental requirements. The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission identifies acquiring or modifying equipment or devices as a possible reasonable accommodation. See the [EEOC Enforcement Guidance on Reasonable Accommodation](#) and the [ADA National Network workplace accommodations fact sheet](#).

QUESTION NO: 9

An employee tells her employment support professional that she is having difficulty reading the small print on a new inventory screen. She wants assistance requesting an accommodation but does not want to share her diagnosis with her supervisor. Which of the following is the BEST initial approach?

- A. Help the employee request an adjustment based on her difficulty reading the inventory screen.
- B. Tell the supervisor the employee's diagnosis so the supervisor understands the need.
- C. Wait until the employee receives a performance warning before discussing support.
- D. Ask the supervisor to choose an accommodation without consulting the employee.

ANSWER: A

Explanation:

The best approach is to help the employee describe the work-related limitation and request an effective adjustment, such as screen magnification or accessible display settings. An accommodation request does not require the employee to disclose unnecessary diagnostic details. The discussion should focus on the employee's difficulty accessing the inventory screen and the change that would enable her to perform the job.

The employer may seek limited documentation when the disability or need for accommodation is not obvious, but the employment support professional should not disclose the diagnosis without the employee's informed authorization. Waiting until performance declines or asking the supervisor to select an accommodation without employee input is not person-centered or responsive.

QUESTION NO: 10

A job seeker who receives SSI has been offered a position with variable weekly hours. She is worried that accepting the job will immediately end all of her benefits, and she is considering declining the offer. Which of the following is the MOST appropriate action for the employment support professional?

- A. Help her obtain individualized benefits counseling about the proposed employment.
- B. Assure her that SSI benefits will not change as long as her hours vary.
- C. Advise her to decline the offer until she no longer receives SSI.
- D. Recommend that she accept the job without discussing the effect of earnings.

ANSWER: A

Explanation:

The employment support professional should help the job seeker obtain individualized benefits counseling before she makes an informed decision about the offer. SSI payment rules are affected by earnings, other income, resources, and individual circumstances. A qualified benefits counselor can explain reporting requirements, available work incentives, and the likely effect of the proposed wages and schedule.

The professional should not promise that benefits will remain unchanged or advise the job seeker to limit hours without individualized analysis. Telling her to accept the job without addressing her concern also fails to support informed choice. Benefits counseling helps the job seeker evaluate work while avoiding inaccurate assumptions about SSI.

QUESTION NO: 11

An employee uses a visual task list to help them manage day-to-day tasks assigned by their supervisor. This is an example of:

- A. an individualized education plan.
- B. a workplace accommodation.
- C. a task analysis.
- D. an assistive technology tool.

ANSWER: D

Explanation:

an assistive technology tool. is correct because a visual task list is a practical tool that supports an employee's ability to organize, remember, sequence, prioritize, and independently complete work tasks. Assistive technology includes not only sophisticated electronic devices and software, but also low-technology tools that reduce barriers created by disability and increase functional independence. A task list may use written words, pictures, icons, color coding, checkboxes, or a digital format, depending on the employee's individual communication, learning, memory, executive-function, or attention needs.

In employment support, the important feature is the tool's functional purpose: it helps the person perform job responsibilities successfully and with greater independence. The visual list can be tailored to the employee's duties and updated as work routines change, while allowing the employee to check progress throughout a shift. This approach is consistent with CESP's focus on identifying workplace and related supports that promote successful, integrated employment. APSE describes CESP as a credential focused on competencies required to support individuals in employment: [APSE CESP Central](#). The U.S. Department of Labor's Job Accommodation Network also identifies organizational aids, including visual schedules and checklists, as examples of effective cognitive-support strategies: [JAN: Cognitive Disabilities](#).

QUESTION NO: 12

To customize a job for an employee, an employment support professional should identify all the following EXCEPT:

- A. job duties not essential to the employer's needs
- B. job duties that remove employees from their areas of expertise, and combine the tasks into one position to save employer money
- C. tasks that are not being done or done often enough, and negotiate a job description
- D. tasks for which the employer is paying overtime that could be combined into a position to save the company money

ANSWER: B

Explanation:

The appropriate exception is *job duties that remove employees from their areas of expertise, and combine the tasks into one position to save employer money*. Customized employment is an individualized, employer-focused process that seeks a strong match between a job seeker's interests, strengths, conditions for success, and contributions and a business's genuine needs. Employment support professionals use discovery and employer engagement to identify unmet operational needs, tasks that can be reorganized, and duties that fit the individual's qualifications and preferences. The resulting negotiated job description should provide real value to the business while supporting a meaningful, sustainable employment relationship for the employee.

Removing other employees from work within their expertise simply to consolidate duties is not, by itself, a person-centered customization strategy. A job should not be designed solely around cost savings when that restructuring disrupts effective use of existing staff expertise or lacks a clear connection to the job seeker's strengths and employment goals. APSE's practice material frames customization around identifying employer needs and developing duties that create a mutually beneficial match. The U.S. Department of Labor likewise describes customized employment as individualizing the employment relationship to meet both the job candidate's needs and the employer's needs. See [APSE CESP Practice Exam](#) and [U.S. Department of Labor: Customized Employment](#).

QUESTION NO: 13

An employment support professional is invited to a meeting after an employer reports that an employee has missed several shifts. Before discussing possible workplace supports, the professional learns that the employee has not been contacted and has not authorized communication about personal circumstances. Which of the following should the professional do FIRST?

- A. Contact the employee to determine desired support and obtain authorization for any communication.
- B. Tell the employer that the absences are probably related to the employee's disability.
- C. Ask the employee's family for medical information to share with the employer.
- D. Recommend that the employer excuse all future absences without discussion.

ANSWER: A

Explanation:

The professional should contact the employee, using an appropriate method, to determine whether the employee wants support and what information may be shared. The employee must remain central to planning about attendance, workplace communication, and any disability-related or personal information.

Although the employer's attendance concern is legitimate, the professional should not speculate about medical or personal causes, disclose information, or develop a plan without the employee's participation when it can reasonably be obtained. With the employee's authorization, the professional can then help address the employer's operational needs and identify appropriate supports.

QUESTION NO: 14

Which of the following is NOT an APSE ethical guideline?

- A. Providing work supports on the job
- B. Self determination
- C. Individuals with severe disabilities being unemployable
- D. Respect for the individual

ANSWER: C

Explanation:

"Individuals with severe disabilities being unemployable" is not an APSE ethical guideline. APSE's professional values and ethical approach are grounded in the presumption that people with disabilities can work in their communities when they have access to individualized opportunities, appropriate supports, and meaningful choices. Employment professionals are expected to recognize each person's strengths, interests, preferences, and capacity for contribution rather than make decisions based on disability labels or assumptions about the intensity of support a person may need. This principle is central to competitive integrated employment: work should be a real and viable option for people with significant disabilities, including people who may require ongoing or customized supports to succeed. Treating severe disability as evidence that a person is unemployable conflicts with self-determination, informed choice, dignity, inclusion, and the expectation that employment services pursue valued roles in the community. APSE's stated vision is that all people with disabilities have the

opportunity to work and participate fully in their communities, while its ethical guidance emphasizes respectful, person-centered employment support. See APSE's [mission, vision, and values](#) and its [Ethical Guidelines for Professionals in Supported Employment](#).

QUESTION NO: 15

Which of the following is the BEST resource that an employment support professional can provide to a business to demonstrate a person's experience?

- A. Social networking account
- B. Job analysis
- C. Visual portfolio
- D. Individualized employment plan

ANSWER: C

Explanation:

Visual portfolio is the best resource because it gives an employer concrete, relevant evidence of a job seeker's experience, skills, interests, and accomplishments. A portfolio can be tailored to the particular business and may include photographs of completed work, work samples, certificates, short videos of task performance, examples of tools or technology used, and brief descriptions of the individual's contributions. This approach is especially valuable when a person's abilities may not be fully represented by a conventional résumé, limited work history, or an interview alone.

In employment support, effective job development involves learning an employer's needs and clearly connecting a candidate's strengths to those needs. A visual portfolio helps make that connection quickly and respectfully by allowing the business to see demonstrated competencies rather than relying only on generalized statements about them. It also supports person-centered employment practices: the job seeker can participate in selecting materials that accurately represent their preferences, capabilities, and employment goals. The portfolio should be shared with the person's informed consent and contain only information relevant to the employment opportunity. This use of individualized, evidence-based marketing aligns with APSE's focus on competitive integrated employment and effective employment supports. See [APSE CESP Certification](#) and the U.S. Department of Labor's [Customized Employment](#) guidance.

QUESTION NO: 16

Sam has a significant cognitive disability. His job begins in one week and he needs systematic instruction to assist him in learning his job duties. Which of the following is LEAST important for you to do in preparing him for work prior to his first day?

- A. Observe the job to organize the daily routine, establish job duties, and identify a co-worker to provide natural supports.
- B. Ensure that he has rescheduled his medical appointments and recreation activities scheduled for next month so that they do not interfere with his work schedule and natural supports
- C. Arrange for him to attend the new employee orientation and take the time to work his shift with him to develop a job task analysis and identify natural supports.
- D. Observe and interview his co-workers to complete a task and job duty analysis, and identify natural workplace supports.

ANSWER: B

Explanation:

Ensure that he has rescheduled his medical appointments and recreation activities scheduled for next month so that they do not interfere with his work schedule and natural supports is the least important pre-start activity. Although employment support professionals should help people plan for reliable attendance and address scheduling barriers when needed, appointments and activities occurring next month are not an immediate prerequisite to Sam's first day or to delivering

systematic instruction. This type of personal scheduling can be addressed collaboratively with Sam, and, where appropriate and authorized by him, with his chosen support network after his employment routine is underway. The urgent preparation priority is obtaining job-specific information needed to teach essential duties effectively in the actual workplace. APSE's CESP framework emphasizes individualized employment supports that promote successful workplace participation, including workplace-based assessment, instruction, and use of naturally occurring supports. Preparing a job routine, identifying task demands, and understanding available coworker or supervisor support directly inform systematic instruction and help ensure that assistance is relevant, efficient, and respectful of Sam's role as an employee. For further information, see [APSE CESP Central](#) and [APSE's resources on integrated employment and supported employment practice](#).