



Supporting Meat Retailing  
apprentices who have a  
specific disability

# Scenario: Apprentice with a disability

## *Introduction*

- In this session, I will be discussing the difficulties and challenges that confronted an apprentice retail butcher who was diagnosed with Asperger syndrome as a child.
- This particular syndrome is a developmental disorder that affects how the brain processes information.
- People with Asperger syndrome may be helped with support, regular routine and training
- Upon reflection, as his assessor in the workplace, I had to not only acknowledge his learning difficulties, but also consider his own individual learning styles so he could complete his TAFE studies.

# Scenario: Apprentice with a disability

## *Training providers perspective:*

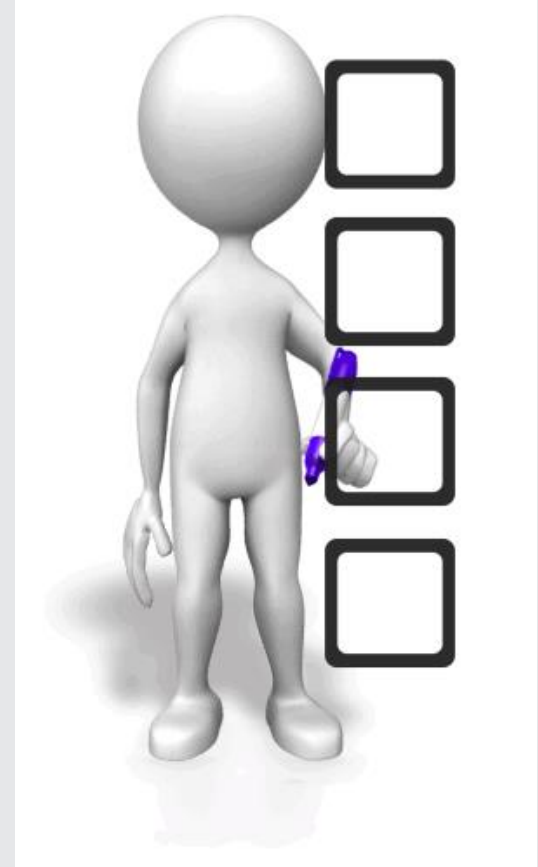
- ✓ Apprentice enrolled in flexible delivery mode (workplace)
- ✓ The apprentice is only assessed in the workplace, not trained by the RTO
- ✓ Apprentice did not declare his disability at the time of enrolment (funding issues)



# Scenario: Apprentice with a disability (cont'd)

## Apprentices family perspective:

- ✓ Parents are anxious,
- ✓ Mother assisting with theory work,
- ✓ Parents worried how he was coping,
- ✓ Father a High School teacher and had higher expectations for his son, (why become a butcher in the first place)



# Scenario: Apprentice with a disability (cont'd)

## Employers perspective:

- ✓ Apprentice is the son of a friend,
- ✓ Very frustrated by apprentices inability to follow, the daily routine and running of the shop,
- ✓ Employer had no disability awareness,
- ✓ Apprentice was not developing time management skills,
- ✓ Apprentice inability to prioritise tasks,
- ✓ Apprentice had no sense of urgency in work related tasks (too slow)
- ✓ ***Employer pulling his hair out and wants to sack the apprentice!***



# What did the I do from an RTO's point of view?

- I assured the employer I would contact the teacher consultant (TC) for students with a disability at Granville TAFE College ASAP,
- I contacted the TC the same day,
- I contacted the employer a few days later to inform him that the TC would contact him ASAP regarding assistance for his apprentice.



# How did the RTO assist the apprentice to keep his job?

*Information gathered by teacher consultant (TC) for students with a disability*

- TC met with all parties (on site) to determine the issues,
- TC conducted psychometric assessment on apprentice,
- TC identified apprentices disability,
- TC identified prior educational history,
- TC established the employers goals,
- What did the employer want?
- What would be a reasonable outcome ?



# How did the RTO assist the apprentice to keep his job?

## What could the assessor provide?

- Provide greater flexibility in the assessment process
- Research availability of federal government funding for one to one training
- Change from workplace delivery to College based





# How did the RTO assist the apprentice to keep his job? (cont'd)

## Barriers:

- ✓ availability of funding
- ✓ time restraints applied by employer
- ✓ lack of workplace mentors education
- ✓ apprentice only recently passed drivers licence
- ✓ apprentice was not a confident driver and could only cope driving to and from work
- ✓ parents worried about apprentice catching a train to TAFE college
- ✓ teaching section was relocating for 12 months due to major renovations to another TAFE college further away

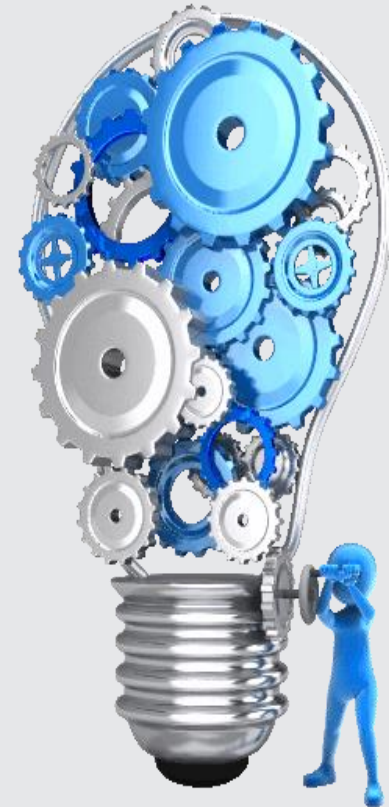
## Outcome:

- ✓ workplace training/assessment was successful because funding was made available to mentor, train and assess apprentice by the RTO

# How to support an apprentice with a disability in the workplace

## Apprentice's issues

- Diagnosed with a learning disability and auditory disorder at school,
- Below average in reading, spelling, mathematical skills and cannot be addressed by remediation,
- Very slow at all work tasks,
- Could not remember what tasks to do next,
- Distracted by background noise and bright lighting,
- Took long extended bathroom breaks



# How to support an apprentice with a disability in the workplace (cont'd)

## On the other hand, apprentice's attributes:

- ✓ Very keen and eager to learn,
- ✓ Punctual,
- ✓ Clean and neat appearance,
- ✓ Customers liked him,
- ✓ Had a good sense of humour,
- ✓ Good rapport with other employees.



# What support did the apprentice require in the workplace ?

- ✓ Practice with technical skills,
- ✓ Assistance with time management,
- ✓ Assistance with work and shop routine,
- ✓ Assistance with theory work.



# What was needed to be able to provide tailored assistance in the work place?

## Funding:

- ✓ Application was made to the federal government for employing an apprentice with a disability,
- ✓ Successful in application, \$5000 was made available to enable support to be delivered,
- ✓ Wage subsidised by the federal government so the employer could offset reduction in productivity.



# What was needed to be able to provide tailored assistance in the workplace?

## VET teacher: What was on my radar:

- ✓ I had the desire to assist the apprentice, however, I had to demonstrate that the apprentice could be supported and trained on the job,
- ✓ I needed an agreeable employer,
- ✓ I required employer to continue to employ apprentice,
- ✓ I required the apprentice to adapt to a new situation



# What did the support sessions in the workplace look like?

## What did I do

- I negotiated with the employer a suitable time of the week,
- I negotiated 8 x 4 hour one on one training and support sessions,
- I provided intensive learner support, addressing all of the employers and apprentices concerns,
- I provided detailed procedures for apprentice to establish a structured and well timed daily routine,
- I identified his learning styles. (how he learnt)



# What did the support sessions in the workplace look like? (cont'd)

- Demonstration and corrective feedback to the apprentice,
- Practice sessions in basic butchery skills: knife sharpening, breaking (including bandsaw), boning, slicing, rolling and tray packing,
- Videoed practical sessions to provide feedback on technique,
- Verbal questioning throughout practical sessions to determine skills and knowledge.
- Apprentice practised practical skills throughout the week.





# Outcomes

- ✓ Last two training sessions apprentice was able to perform all specified tasks without coaching,
- ✓ Time management was vastly improved due to structured daily routine, including ***only 2 minute bathroom breaks!!!***
- ✓ Apprentice is now ***very competent, confident and quick*** in all general butchery skills, including breaking carcase meat,



# Outcomes (cont'd)

- ✓ Apprentice completed Cert. III in Meat Processing (Retail Butcher),
- ✓ Employer very happy,
- ✓ Parents happy,
- ✓ Apprentice happy and is now employed as a FT butcher at the same shop,
- ✓ Everyone involved in the programme including, employer, apprentice, parents, TAFE disabilities coordinator and assessor are now aware what can be achieved through collaboration and '***focusing on the student, not the disability***'.



# Group activity:

## What are the issues in the workplace?

- Who takes responsibility for training apprentices who have a disability in the workplace?
- What is the role of the RTO in the workplace if an apprentice has a disability?
- How does the RTO identify apprentices who have a learning disability?
- How would a workplace trainer understand the requirements of an apprentice who has a disability?
- What is the role of the assessor if an apprentice has a disability?
- Who will be the apprentices mentor?  
e.g. workplace trainer, RTO, fellow worker, counsellor?
- How could this process impact on the employer, apprentice and the RTO?
- What were the students learning styles?



Any questions



