



# Understand the Role of a Job Coach



The **Inclusive** Workplace

Many individuals on the autism spectrum or with an intellectual disability may benefit from a **job coach** at work. You may have heard the term before, but what exactly is a job coach?

**\*Note:** There may be differences across Canada in what a **job coach** is called, the services they provide, and when they become involved.

## What is a job coach?

A job coach is a common workplace **accommodation**.

A job coach is someone who supports an employee on the job. A job coach provides customized and flexible support to the employee in:

- Learning the tasks and responsibilities of the job.
- Learning and navigating the social, cultural, and behavioural aspects of the workplace.



## Why might an employee need a job coach?

Employees who are on the autism spectrum or have an intellectual disability may take longer to learn, or learn in different ways. They may communicate and process information in different ways as well.

A job coach supports them in **learning** on the job and **navigating** the social aspects of the workplace. The aim of job coaching is to support the employee to be effective and independent in their role.



Typically, job coaching support decreases over time as the employee learns the job.

## A job coach is ...

### A workplace accommodation

- Like other accommodations, a job coach supports an employee to work to their full potential.
- A job coach isn't special treatment. Having a job coach is simply an accommodation that allows the employee the opportunity to perform at their best.

### Customized

- A job coach provides supports that are customized to the unique needs of the employee and the workplace.

### Unintrusive

- A job coach provides support that is as **unintrusive** as possible.
- A job coach allows the employee to start and finish work tasks as independently as possible.



## A job coach is not ...

### Your employee

- A job coach isn't an employee of your business. They are typically employed by an employment agency.

### A liability

- A job coach isn't a liability to your business. They're employed by an employment agency and will have workplace insurance coverage through their employer.

### Someone who does the employee's job

- A job coach isn't there to perform the employee's job. Instead, they provide the employee with support and tools so the employee can learn and excel at the job on their own.

## How does a job coach support you?

Although a job coach's support is primarily focused on the employee, they may support you, your team, and your business as well. Here are some examples of how a job coach may support you and your organization.

**Note:** There are differences among employment agencies and services provided.

### Across the employment trajectory

- Facilitate conversations, discussions, and decisions with you and the candidate or employee.
- Provide one-on-one consultation to suggest and implement accommodations to bring out the candidate or employee's best work.

### During the interview

- Support the interviewee by prompting, reframing, and clarifying or rephrasing.

### Onboarding

- Support the employee with completing pre-employment forms and training. Assist in establishing the employee's employment contract.
- Work with the employee to learn the job duties. Develop tools such as checklists or visual instructions to support learning job tasks.
- Assist with on-site training.



### In the workplace

- Provide inclusive workplace training for you and your staff.
- Support the employee with workplace policies (for example, who to notify if sick).
- Support the employee with learning and navigating written rules of the workplace.
- Support the employee during employment events (for example, performance evaluations or negotiating a promotion).

### Social, behavioural, and cultural aspects of the workplace

- Support the employee with learning and understanding the unwritten rules of the workplace.
- Help you, the employee, and co-workers navigate social aspects of the workplace (for example, workplace culture, teamwork, and collaboration) and encourage social inclusion.
- Support you and the employee with addressing workplace misunderstandings.

## What does job coach support look like?

A job coach may use a variety of strategies and techniques. For example:

### During the job interview



#### Prompting

Job coaches may assist or encourage the candidate to say something if they are hesitating.

#### Redirecting

The job coach may change the direction or the focus of the candidate's conversation.

#### Rephrasing

The job coach may restate something the interviewer asked, but say it in a different way.

#### Clarifying

The job coach may make an interview question clearer or easier to understand.

### Onboarding



#### Task analysis

To support an employee learn the tasks of their job, a job coach may use task analysis. This is the process of breaking down a work task into its smaller component parts. Each small step is taught in order.

The job coach may work with you or your team to truly understand all the steps involved in a task and break it down into small steps.

#### Modelling

A job coach may use modelling to support an employee learning a task. Modelling involves the employee watching someone (for example, their job coach or another employee) successfully demonstrate the task.

## On the job



### Assistive technology

The job coach may implement technology-based tools (such as mobile apps) to support an employee to learn work-related skills.

### Self-prompting tools

A job coach may design and implement self-prompting tools (for example, a to-do list, flowchart, or alarm) to support the employee working efficiently.



## Virtual support for an employee

Job coaching can be done virtually. A job coach will discuss technology and virtual support with you. When support is provided virtually, opportunities for informal discussion between the job coach and the employee's supervisor or manager are less frequent. The job coach may want to connect with the employee's supervisor or manager (for example, at the beginning or end of a shift).

### What might this virtual support look like?

#### Virtual support using technology



Virtual support can be done by phone call, text message, email, video call, or a combination of these.

- **Text messages.** Useful for quick check-ins, reminders, and short discussions.
- **Emails.** Can be used for sending reminders, sharing information, discussing concerns, and providing feedback.
- **Video calls (such as Skype or FaceTime).** Enable the employee to show their workspace to their job coach.
- **Video conferencing tools (such as Zoom).** Features on such tools can allow the job coach and the employee to both look at emails, schedules, and documents at the same time.
- **Mobile or tablet-based apps.** Can support learning on the job.

#### Video modelling



The job coach can use a video call to provide the employee with a demonstration of how to do something.

A job coach can also provide work-task modelling to employees through video recordings, rather than doing it in person.

Pre-recorded examples can be sent to the employee by smartphone or tablet.

### Next steps

Do you have questions about the job coach role? Consider reaching out to the candidate or employee's job coach or their employment agency.

## Sources

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