



SMALL ADJUSTMENTS; BIG IMPACT

SUPPORTING NEURODIVERSITY IN
RECRUITING AND ADVISING



Agenda

- Key Terminology
- A Twice-Told Tale
 1. Initial Advising
 2. Navigating Gatherings
 3. Applying and Interviewing
- Takeaways and Commitments



Terminology – Quick Refresh

- Neurodivergence vs. Neurotypical
- Accommodations vs. Adjustments



Neurodiverse vs. Neurotypical

Neurodiverse or Neurodivergent

- someone who thinks differently from the way most of the population “expects” that they would

Neurotypical

- someone whose brain behaves like most of society



Accommodations vs. Adjustments

Accommodations

- Modification or adaption made to an employee's work environment or how an employee performs their tasks

Adjustments

- Simple changes
- Low cost, high impact



Current Challenges in Recruiting & Advising Neurodiverse Talent

1. Accessibility and inclusivity
2. Lack of understanding and training of key stakeholders
3. Changing status quo and traditional processes



A Twice-Told Tale

Welcome to Law School

- Career services email says 1Ls should focus on their coursework this fall
- Sam does not attend career orientation
- Sam misses some early summer application deadlines



Attending Career Panel



- Sam attends an in-person career panel
- Sam takes a bit longer than typical to process auditory information
- Sam struggles to follow parts of the conversation



Meeting with Career Counselor

- Sam meets with a career counselor
- Sam has heard conflicting information about the 2L job search timeline
- Sam does not disclose that she identifies as neurodivergent



Small Group Discussion





Take 2

Welcome to Law School – Take 2

- Clarity – say what you mean
- Break job search into separate manageable steps
- Provide accurate job search timelines
- Deliver information in a variety of formats
- Make career programming mandatory



Attending Career Panel – Take 2

- Provide clarity on event purpose, format, appropriate conduct/dress
- Offer virtual options (closed captioning)
- Record programming and provide transcript
- Provide contact information for follow up questions





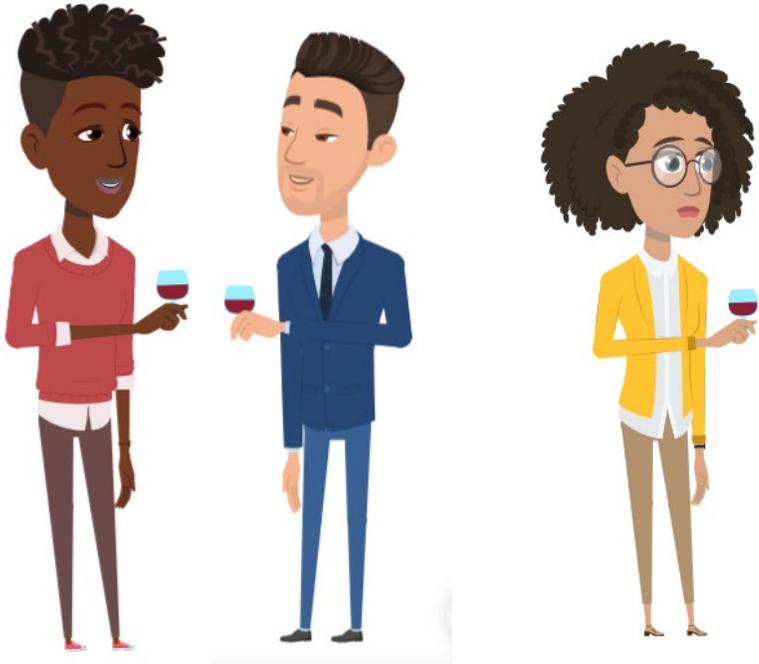
Meeting with Career Counselor – Take 2

- Train staff on disclosure and accommodation issues
- Ensure other departments know your team is a resource
- Discuss disability accommodations in general career programming
- Visit Disabled Law Students Association meeting
- Schedule check-in meetings if process/timeline might change



Navigating Gatherings - Take 1

Networking Reception



- Sam attends a law firm networking event.
- Sam struggles with conversation.
- Sam's senses are overwhelmed by the crowd, noise and smells.





Law School Information Panels

- Sam attends a law school information panel without any reference to neurodiversity.
- There is no discussion on adjustment or accommodations.
- Representatives were unprepared answer questions about disclosure.
- The representatives invite students to call with questions.

Firm Open Houses

- Sam attends her first firm open house.
- Sam finds no information about open house or office layout online.
- No accommodation information is offered.
- The firm does not appear to have an affinity group for neurodivergent employees.



Small Group Discussion





Take 2

Networking Reception – Take 2

- Host events in a variety of ways
- Provide detailed information in advance
- Staff a reception desk; have nametags
- Educate students on networking tips
- Rest spaces



Law School Information Panels– Take 2

- Acknowledgment neurodivergent applicants
- Culture of inclusion and language acceptance
- Disclosure in the application process



Firm Open Houses– Take 2

- Detailed information and directions
- Recruiting videos
- Accommodation requests
- Onsite support
- Highlight affinity groups
- Quiet space
- Training and education of participating lawyers





Applying & Interviewing

Preparing for On-Campus Interviews



- Sam attends an OCI Information Session.
- Presentation is in large, crowded classroom.
- Sam experiences information overload.
- Sam feels information is vague.

Applying through OCI

- Sam submits OCI applications, but struggles with the vague directions.
- Sam cannot find accommodation information for an online assessment.
- There are no instructions for disclosure.
- The firm receiving Sam's application did not train applicant reviewers.



Interviewing through OCI



- Sam receives several OCI interviews.
- Sam wonders what to do, where to go, who interviewers are and the types of questions that will be asked.
- Sam has back-to-back interviews.
- Sam struggles with eye contact.



Call Back or In firm Interviews

- Sam received little or no details regarding his interview
- Sam was assigned a host, but the host reached out at the last minute
- The waiting was large and crowded
- The interviewer list changed during the interview, and an interviewer “popped” in during his last interview
- Sam had some questions about the process, and didn’t know whether notetaking was allowed
- Sam found the questions too open-ended
- A dinner invitation was extended at the end of an interview

Call Backs Follow-up



- Sam received a rejection letter from the his favourite firm but has no idea what he did wrong.

Small Group Discussion





Take 2



Preparing for OCI – Take 2

- Consider offering notes and recording programs with closed captioning
- Provide a copy of the slides
- Create short bite-sized videos
- Create FAQs
- Be specific with instructions and timelines for students

Applying through OCI – Take 2

- Provide specific application instructions in each posting.
- Be clear about accommodation information in postings.
- Provide information about assessments.
- Explain accommodation process.



Application Review– Take 2

- Provide education and training to Student Committees and others who will be reviewing CVs
- Revise evaluation rubrics
- Consider how to better respond to disclosure in an application



Interviewing through OCI – Take 2 for Schools

- Support scheduling - space out interviews.
- Training and education of interviewers
- Host or recommend quiet space
- Provide clear directions about where and when
- Normalize notetaking by providing notepads/pens



Interviewing through OCI – Take 2 for Employers

- Review information currently provided to candidates in advance of OCIs
- Is providing a few standard questions in advance of the OCI an option?
- Training interviewers on how to respond to neurodiverse students
- Review and revise list of standard interview questions; how are you asking your behavioral questions?
- Consider how interviewers rely on interests and gaps



Call Backs – Take 2

- Communicate key details of the process in advance
- Clearly ask about accommodations - early!
- Consider assigning a “host” or “buddy” for interview day
- Consider providing (or assigning) standard questions
- Revise and update education and training for interviewers
- Are “surprise” interviewers really necessary
- Clearly explain next steps and debrief process





Takeaways & Commitment

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

COMMITMENTS – “I WILL”

1. Try in my role
2. Ask about/suggest in my organization



thank you



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