Vocational Psychology: Diagnoses and Disabilities

In a free market economy, where an individual with a disability (even one that could be "reasonably accommodated") may "cost" a company more to employ, whether that be financially or associated with the psychic costs managers experience from being around stigmatized others, what can we as counselors do to try and break through the 30-40% employment barrier that individuals with disabilities are faced with? What can do on an individual level working with a client facing those significant barriers to help them not be one of the 60-70% that remain unemployed? How would our work with them differ from how we may approach working with someone who doesn't face those barriers?

If you are working with a client who has a disability (physical or mental health related), who is experiencing discrimination at work because of their disability but does not want to take any legal action against their employer, how might you inform the client about the relevant protective legislature while still respecting their wish to not take legal action? What other avenues might you explore? How would you balance your duty to honor the client's wishes and advocate for the client?

Imagine you are opening a private practice or are in charge of a mental health clinic. What physical accommodations would you want to make you had for clients with disabilities? What environmental changes would you make? How would you train staff to work with clients with disabilities?

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Case Conceptualization

Part I:
How might this diagnosis affect:
- Career development
- Job attainment and maintenance
- Other life realms – home, relationships, etc.
- Your conceptualization of the client
  - What model(s) or theory(ies) would you use in conceptualization?
- Treatment planning/goals for counseling
  - What activities would you want to do/how would you approach counseling with this ct?

Part II:
Knowing this information:
- How does this impact your conceptualization of this ct?
- How would your treatment plan from Part I change?
- What ethical/legal considerations need to be addressed and/or monitored for this ct?
- What laws support mental healthcare and vocational attainment/maintenance for a ct with this type of disability/background?
- What local resources (KS/MO) would you consider when working with this ct?
- What else would you assess for with this ct (e.g., SI/HI, self harm, comorbid diagnoses, current symptoms, locus of control, etc.)?

Part III:
Design a research study inspired by your client or diagnosis. How would you conduct/carry out this study?