



NETZWERK BERUFLICHE
ASSISTENZ

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Work Assistance for Young People with Autism, Mental Illness and Learning/Multiple Disabilities in Vienna

09.06.2022

arbeitsassistenz.wuk.at

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WUK Arbeitsassistentz (WUK Work Assistance) - Facts

Sponsor: **WUK Werkstätten und Kulturhaus (Workshops and Cultural Center)**

WUK Education and Counseling: 14 Divisions

WUK Work Assistance: 3 central offerings (315 participations per year)

- > Job Acquisition
- > Job Security
- > Partner Business Services

Youth Work Assistance in Vienna: 5 Providers, 4 regional and WUK as supraregional, specialized provider

NEBA - Network for Vocational Assistance:

- > Youth coaching and A-FIT assignment
- > Job coaching and vocational training assistance support young people after their participation in Work Assistance

Target Group and Goals

Specialization in advising young people (15 to 23 Years, Vienna residents) with:

- Autism
- Learning/multiple disabilities
- Mental Illness

Goals:

- Sustainable **inclusion** of participants in apprenticeship and employment relationships
- **Individual support** with apprenticeship or job search and with difficulties in existing employee-employer relationships
- For the participants and for their (prospective) employers

Specialization of WUK Work Assistance

- Implementation of a **specialized, supraregional program** with suitable know-how.
A **multiprofessional team** (15 persons) with experts from different fields (psychotherapists, psychologists, business economists etc.) work out individual solutions for young people and businesses.
- **3 Team Specializations (target groups autism/mental illness/learning and multiple disabilities)**
- **1 person provides company services** and takes over inclusive recruiting
- **Cooperations** with specialized NEBA programs in Vienna (Jobtrain, WUK Coaching Plus und WUK faktor.c, ÖAHJobcoaching).
When necessary, cooperation with regional NEBA programs for needs-based support.

Work Assistance Tasks



- **Support with Apprenticeship and Job Search (1. und 2. Labour Market)**
 - Accompaniment throughout the application process
 - offer skills and test preparation
 - Organization of internships
 - Search for individual solutions to overcome obstacles
- **Safeguard of existing apprenticeship or employment relationships**



- **Company recruitment and consulting**
 - Provide information about financial incentives and support opportunities
 - Set up cooperation with The Ritz-Carlton, Vienna/Billa branches
 - Work together with “KMU’s” (small- or medium-sized companies)
 - Maintain regular contact after negotiations are completed

Special Features of the Advisory Service



- Work highly **flexible** and **individualized** → a “Standard Program” for all does not work!
- **Make individualized plans and rules** must be determined
- **Intensive support and advising** in all phases of the accompaniment: Failures have a different status → **Risk of destabilization and termination!**
- **Relationship is the key to success!** Provide support also in times of crisis, participants can come back (e.g. after inpatient stay, loss of apprenticeship, employment relationship problems)
- **Daily/Weekly structure** development (e.g. offer group offers/peer group, social situation practice, route planning, daily routine,...)



Special Features of the Advisory Service



- **Intensive Networking:**
 - What is my role?
 - What other supporters are there?
- **Education in Self Management**
(to notice early warning signs before crossing personal borders, where can I get help, emergency plans...)
- **Individual General Conditions** for the employers and the participants to work out
- **Specialized Application Training:** Training of social competencies, body language and facial expressions, personal hygiene, explaine & resume gaps, what I need and what I can do, self-assurance
- **Advisor Competence:** Very high expertise and high frustration tolerance

What Businesses must consider



- Does Work Assistance appear or not?
If yes, for what reason → Consider the stigma of mental illness and other invisible difficulties!
- **Psychological Education - Explain!** Learn to interpret symptoms (e.g. people with depression or with autistic perception give the impression of being unmotivated, ...). Convey diagnoses, without stigmatizing and stirring up prejudice – describe (how is Person x, what does s/he, etc.).
- **Training and preparation of staff**
- Address the **strengths and weaknesses** of the specific person
- **Partner Business Services:** Establish contacts and cooperations (e.g. Ritz Carlton, Nestle, REWE)

Impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic

Basic situation before Covid-19:

- Already uncertainty for our target groups because of their disability;
- Already marginalized target groups we work with;
- Fewer perspectives & fewer chance to put the foot in the labour market because of their disability
- Basically need more time to gain employability

Impacts on our work – „the new Normal“:

- More stress than before Covid-19
- The content changed a little: Stabilisation of our clients in a time of uncertainty; talking about Covid-19 was necessary; How will I get well through the crises? Main task: To stay in contact anyway!
- Change of our work style: we need to be very **flexible**; immediate change from personal counselling to digital visibility (i.e. zoom) or we met to go for a walk because office was closed
- High measure of stress for us because the situation was/is not foreseeable and clear measures always changed (more intensive); lack of planability and reliability of work life
- We had more topics to co-supervise because sociale projects or counseling centers were also overloaded or sometimes no contact possibility (i.e. living situation, financial problems)

Impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic

Impacts on young people:

- Social withdrawal – they disappeared
- Increase of depression (lack of perspectives, no chance)
- Unforeseeable situation had a high impact to our target groups (i.e. for people who have autism - they need certainty and became irritated)
- The change to digital life sets a high standard of personal flexibility and capability to handle; some didn't make it

Impacts on companies:

- closed or Home Office; no visit of companies to get a feeling for the job; Some branches were totally closed (i.e. Tourism – Hotels, Restaurants – Service)
- No internship possible; or too fast starts of internship
- Just time for the fitter adolescents -> the fitter won!
- Time of reaction became faster (faster invitation to job interviews; faster organization of internships ; do it now or never -> too fast for our adolescents)
- Some business areas are the winners: IT, Retail Trade, pharmaceutical industry

Wishful adjustments for young people

- Adaption of existing projects more focused on the real needs of our target groups (i.e. for Autism: smaller groups inter-company apprenticeship)
- Taskforce Autism: collection of statistical data, need of valid data to derive continuous measures for all ages in the perception of those affected
- The right to work: to make companies more responsible to employ young people with a disability
- More free places of psychotherapeutic treatment and faster access
- Gap between vocational education and final exam: need of adaption of the final apprenticeship exam for our target groups to decrease failure
- More internships in companies -> Incentives for internship possibilities
- Adaption of the application process in the public sector: high level not realistic for our target groups (2 ways: of application; normal and with a disability)
- More time to accompany the process->avoidance of change in support
- More projects that combine career orientation and psychosocial aspects for the age group 15 to 23
- More professionals to support in specific need

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THANK YOU for your attention!



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FÖRDERGEBER-LOGO



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