

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

a handbook for guidance counsellors when working with students with disabilities

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FOREWORD

The aim of the Association of Higher Education Access and Disability (AHEAD) is to promote equal access to third level education for students with disabilities.

This manual has been developed as part of a project funded through the Dormant Accounts Fund.

AHEAD gratefully acknowledges the assistance and advice from the steering group of the project:

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The members of AHEAD are the driving force of the associations work – third level institutions and universities, and we acknowledge with gratitude their ongoing support and constructive criticism.

We would also like to thank the guidance counsellors who shared their thoughts, concerns and experiences, and so contributed to this highly innovative and user friendly manual.

Learning for one,
Learning for all

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Introduction

"poor are those among us who lose their capacity to dream,"

Paulo Freire

Guidance counsellors have an important role to play in helping lay foundations for the future and are in a strong position to influence the direction a student takes. Strong communication and interview skills, an awareness of what students need, knowledge of assessment techniques, contacts within education and the workplace all contribute to the guidance of students towards fulfilling their potential.

Many people go through their lives having little or no contact with people with disabilities. As a consequence, they may feel apprehensive or uncomfortable, feel that they will not be able to cope and worry that they may say or do the wrong thing. Many imagine that they need background knowledge of the medical aspects of disability. The reality is however that guidance counsellors already have all the interpersonal and work skills they need to work effectively with students with disabilities. Like their non-disabled peers, many students with disabilities find the process of making career choices challenging and confusing. Some may experience difficulties in accessing the information they need in order to make informed choices. Students with a disability, like their peers, have the same need to access careers guidance services. There may be some variations in the type and format of information sought and in some cases, there may need to be some flexibility in the time allocated. Like their peers, students with a disability need to identify their strengths and interests and find out about education and employment opportunities, which build on their strengths. They also need to identify the kind of supports they might need and where to find them. With growing numbers of students with disabilities entering higher education, career guidance professionals are increasingly being called upon to provide counselling services to this client group. This handbook has been developed with these guidance counsellors in mind. It aims to support career guidance services in providing a better service to all its users but with a particular emphasis on assisting those students who have a disability.

USING THIS HANDBOOK

You will find three types of activities included in the Career Guidance Handbook.

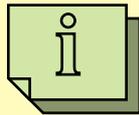
For easy reference, these activities have been allocated an icon, which appears at the beginning of each activity.

The different types of activities are:

Exercise



Case Study



Learning Point





Profile

CAROLINE CASEY – FOUNDING CEO. THE AISLING FOUNDATION



In June 2000 Caroline Casey set up the Aisling Foundation, as an adventurous, major fund-raising initiative "to inspire people into thinking of disability in a positive way. I wanted to help open people's eyes."

From January – May 2001, Caroline trekked 1,000 Km across southern India on the back of her elephant Bhadra, raising awareness of what people with a disability can do.

A former management consultant with Accenture, Caroline is visually impaired to the degree that she is registered legally blind.

International response to her trek as chronicled in the National Geographic documentary "Elephant Vision" (also screened on RTÉ One) has been widespread.

Now one of Ireland's most high profile women, 33 year old Caroline Casey has received considerable media attention both at home and abroad, based on the successes she achieved during her 1,000 km solo elephant-back voyage across India in 2001 and her circumnavigation of the world in eighty different forms of transport in 2002. More recently she established Ireland's first ever Ability Awards – the O2 Ability Awards – which she co-presented with Pat Kenny on RTÉ One on Feb 2nd 2005.

In recognition of her achievements she was named one of the ESB/Rehab People of the Year 2002 to recognise her "efforts to increase awareness of the issues facing people with disabilities"; one of Junior Chamber International's "Ten Outstanding Young People of the World" 2002 and one of the RADAR (Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation) UK's People of the Year 2001.

A Board member of FÁS since January 2001 and Comhairle since October 2002, Caroline continues the work of The Aisling Foundation.

The Foundation's philosophy is always to focus on Ability.

"Be successful. Open your eyes and dare to be different"
Caroline Casey

www.theaislingfoundation.org

MODULE 1: DISABILITY TODAY

Aims and objectives

After completing this module, you should be able to,

- Define what constitutes a disability
- Outline the three models, which currently predominate in the field of disability

1.1 WHAT IS DISABILITY?

It is estimated that 10% of the Irish population or 360,000 people, have some type of disability. (Report for the Commission for the Status of People with Disabilities 1996)

In recent years there has been a steady increase in the numbers of students with disabilities gaining access to third level education and an increasing number of students with dyslexia.

Initial findings however, of a survey carried out by AHEAD on behalf of the Higher Education Authority in 2000 indicate that students with disabilities account for just 1.1% of the undergraduate population participating in third level education in Ireland. (Hoey 1999)

With an increasing number of students with disabilities seeking access to higher education, there is a corresponding increase in the numbers gaining the qualifications and skills necessary for entry to employment.

Some of these people will, like other students, look for information and guidance from Career Guidance Services.

It is not always obvious when someone has a disability. A person may, for example have a **hidden disability** such as dyslexia or epilepsy.

Others, such as those with a visual or physical impairment, may have a more obvious disability.

Some people may have **multiple disabilities** or secondary impairments caused by the primary disability.

An example of this might be a person with a condition such as muscular sclerosis. Additional impairments such as difficulties with speech or co-ordination may pose greater problems than the primary condition.

The main categories of disability, which you are likely to encounter in your work, are:

- Specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia or dyspraxia
- Physical disability
- Blindness and visual impairment
- Deafness and hearing impairment
- Mental health disability



It is not always easy to determine whether a person has a disability and many types of disability are hidden to the casual observer.

There are many examples of famous and successful people with disabilities.

Orlando Bloom – Actor
Dyslexia

Christy Brown – Writer
Cerebral Palsy

Christopher Reeves – Actor
Quadriplegia

Walt Disney – Cartoonist
Dyslexia

Stevie Wonder – Singer
Visual impairment

Heather Mills – Campaigner
Amputee

Albert Einstein – Scientist
Dyslexia

Beethoven – Composer
Hearing impairment

Andrea Bocelli – Opera singer
Visual impairment

Cher – Singer/actress
Dyslexia

John F. Kennedy – American president
Dyslexia

Agatha Christie – Author
Epilepsy

Julius Caesar – Roman Emperor
Epilepsy

Ronan Tynan – Opera singer
Amputee

Tom Cruise – Actor
Dyslexia



CASE STUDY

Maria – Student

Maria is nineteen, has been diagnosed as having dyslexia and has just completed the Leaving Certificate. Maria received resource inputs while at school in addition to accommodations for sitting her exams. She gained 380 points, scoring well in maths, home economics, science and art.

Maria does not believe that her ability is reflected in her exam results as she has difficulty with writing and spelling and can only write very slowly.

Maria applied to St. Angela's for direct entry to a B.Ed course. She feels that she would make better progress on the course if she didn't have to write during exams.

1.2 MODELS OF DISABILITY

There are currently three models of disability which predominate the field of disability

- The Medical Model
- The Social Model
- The Universal Human Rights Model

1.2.1 The Medical Model

Medicine and its allied professions still play a very important role in defining and regulating disability.

Some of the assumptions made by this model are that people with disabilities:

- Are objects of care
- Are not 'normal'
- Need specialised services
- Are sick or incapacitated

The emphasis is very much on dependence with the focus on the person's disability rather on his or her abilities and needs.

The Medical Model essentially sees the person with the disability as the problem and fails to look at the causes of social exclusion.

Rather than attempting to remove existing barriers to inclusion, this model attempts to 'fit' the person with a disability into existing systems.



Until recently, the Medical Model of disability was the major influence in directing policy and the provision of services for people with disabilities in Ireland.

1.2.2 The Social Model

People with disabilities are often excluded from many aspects of society.

The Social Model argues that this has little to do with their disability but more to do with how society is constructed and organised. The fact that someone has a disability does not mean that they are not able to participate in society. The presence of prejudice, social and physical barriers, however means that many people with disabilities are excluded from such everyday activities as recreation, education and work.

Some of the factors, which affect people with disabilities, include:

- Segregated education and services
- Inaccessible transport or buildings
- Low income and poverty
- Misconceptions about disability

The Social Model clearly recognised that individuals have different needs and that people with disabilities may need to have their needs identified and addressed on an individual basis.

'If society were organised on a more equitable basis, many of the problems associated with not being 'perfect' (if such a concept had any logical basis) would disappear' Brisenden, S.J. 1986



The Social Model argues that the issue of disability should be addressed by restructuring society to make it inclusive to all its citizens.

1.2.3 The Universal Human Rights Model

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states the right to equality for all people including those with disabilities. The reality is, however that many people with disabilities are denied access to education, training and work due to attitudinal, social and physical barriers. Generally, the provision of facilities and services for disadvantaged groups is closely linked to the State and society's willingness to provide the necessary resources.

The Universal Human Rights Model recognises that people with disabilities are entitled to enjoy the full range of rights and freedoms as other citizens without being discriminated against on the grounds of disability. It accepts that the State may have to take steps to ensure that these rights and freedoms are upheld.

In the context of education, disability tends to be associated with the types of supports needed. The fact that a student has a disability does not necessarily mean that they need a high level of support or accommodation. Some people will have little or no need for adjustments or adaptations.



A United Nations expert group meeting on internal norms and standards relating to disability stated that it considered the human rights perspective to be the correct approach to the rights of people with disabilities.



Which model of disability is most dominant in your career guidance service?

1.3 Frequently asked questions

- Q.** I don't have any training in disability so I'm really apprehensive about working with students who have a disability.
- A.** Guidance counsellors are highly trained professionals who are skilled in dealing with career guidance issues. These same skills apply to all students, including those with disabilities. It is important, however to be aware of your own attitudes to disability.
- Q.** What happens if I don't think the student is capable of progression?
- A.** A student is unlikely to apply for a course, which is beyond their capabilities. If in doubt, check the course requirements. Can this student, with accommodations, meet those requirements? Always include the student in discussions regarding their future.
- Q.** What about access to building for students who are wheelchair users?
- A.** A wheelchair user encounters similar difficulties as a mother with a pushchair when faced with physical barriers. Society needs to ensure that all its citizens have access on a day-to-day basis to the facilities and premises that they require.
- Q.** I really feel that I need some background medical knowledge in order to be able to work effectively with students who have a disability.
- A.** Because our system of education has, by and large been segregated, most of us have little or no experience of people with disabilities. There is a tendency therefore to focus on the medical aspects of disability. The majority of people with disabilities are healthy and do not suffer from any illness. It is more useful and appropriate, therefore to focus on the person rather than on their disability.
- Q.** Are there any health and safety issues that I need to be concerned about?
- A.** A safe and healthy environment benefits all students and staff and is a legal requirement. Emergency evacuation drills and procedures should take into account people with disabilities.



Profile

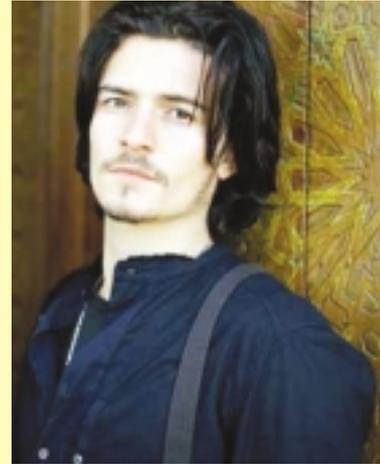
ORLANDO BLOOM – ACTOR

As a teenager, Orlando Bloom struggled with reading and was diagnosed as having Dyslexia.

‘ I jus have difficulties recognising some letters so I had to work harder than other kids. School was always a bit tricky’

When Orlando was trying to get into the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, he had to confront the problem and got great support from his mother.

‘Dyslexia doesn’t mean a lack of intelligence. Don’t laugh at your mates when they have problems with reading. Maybe they’ll become movie stars and you’ll want tickets to their premiers’.



www.theorlandobloomfiles.com

MODULE 2: WORKING WITH THE STUDENT

Aims and objectives

After completing this module, you should be able to,

- Identify your skills and competences in working with students with disabilities
- Understand the need for using different forms of communication to suit the individual's needs
- Adopt the type of language and etiquette that is appropriate in dealing with a student with a disability

2.1 Why is career guidance important?

Students with disabilities face many obstacles as they make the transition from school to college or work so it is important to consider their transition needs as early as possible. This will ensure that they:

- Are prepared for the requirements of higher education and the workplace
- Do not underestimate their capabilities
- Are aware of the range of accommodations that can broaden their course and career options

Guidance Counsellors have an important role to play in helping students to access the resources they need and in enabling them to make choices relevant to their strengths and interests. Studies have also shown that being involved in the career guidance process has a positive impact on student's sense of control over their future careers.

Guidance Counsellors need to:

- Provide students with an understanding of their strengths and interests using valid assessment methods
- Create an awareness of the type of educational and vocational opportunities that exist
- Facilitate students in identifying courses and careers which play on their strengths and minimises the impact of their disability
- Identify what accommodations the student needs

2.2 Students in transition

Students, with the facilitation of Guidance Counsellors, are frequently involved in some form of transition, which can involve.

- Going to college
- Getting training
- Getting experience

Transition means change – in what we do, in our relationships with others and in how we see ourselves. This change places heavy demands on how we cope and our coping skills can be more effective if we:

- Make a plan
- Get support
- Get involved

2.3 How can guidance counsellors work effectively with students with disabilities?

In much the same way as they would with any other student – using the same interpersonal and professional skills that are an intrinsic part of the job.

There may need to be some adaptations or changes of emphasis but the areas of expertise remain the same:

- Assessment of needs
- Involving and consulting the student
- Promoting choice
- Treating all students fairly
- Providing relevant information
- Giving and receiving feedback
- Group-work



What, if any, are your concerns in working with students with disabilities?

2.4 Creating an accessible environment

Both students and counsellors will benefit from working in an environment, which is attractive, accessible and safe. All students like to use Careers Services independently as much as possible and this is to be encouraged.

There are a number of things to bear in mind in making the service accessible for students with disabilities. The following guidelines should enable you to check whether your service, including the materials being used is accessible to all students.

- The Careers Services premises, including toilets, lifts and emergency exits, should be physically accessible for students with physical disabilities or wheelchair users
- Signage needs to be clearly marked, in large, bold type, preferably white or yellow on a dark background
- Desks, bookcases, display boards etc should be at a height where wheelchair users can reach
- Promotional materials and information leaflets should be written in clear, simple language. Table formats should be avoided as they may pose problems for students with dyslexia
- Textual information should be available on floppy disk, audio cassette, large print and in Braille
- Written information should be presented in bold with a clear contrast between background and text
- Induction loop facilities will greatly assist students who are hearing impaired
- Be sure that emergency evacuation procedures include students with disabilities
- Some students may find it useful to have information about specific organisations specialising in disability issues



Carry out an audit of your careers service to check how accessible it is to students with disabilities



CASE STUDY

Michael – Student

Michael is an eighteen-year-old student who, as a child, acquired a hearing impairment as a result of meningitis. He used a hearing aid and has about 30% hearing.

Michael has been attending a mainstream school and has had additional resource hours each week to help with his English and Maths.

Michael is currently in his Leaning Cert year and is good at maths, history, science, construction studies and home economics. He wants to be either a chef or to teach home economics.

2.5 Language and Etiquette

Many people feel uncomfortable when they interact with a person with a disability. They worry about saying the wrong thing or unintentionally causing offence. Communicating with a student with a disability requires the same common sense and courtesy you would use with any other student. The focus should be on the person rather than on their disability.

Relax, be yourself and don't try too hard. Remember, students with a disability have a sense of humour too. Language is important in the construction of disability, and needs to be used in a positive way.

Here are some examples.

2.5.1 Language

- A person **with** a disability
- The person **has** a physical disability
- Wheelchair **user**
- Person who **is** blind or visually impaired
- Person who **is** deaf or hearing impaired
- Person who **has** dyslexia

2.5.2 Etiquette

People with disabilities are all different. Each individual has needs, which are specific to him/her. It is important, therefore to focus on the person rather than on their disability.

The following points should be noted when interacting with a person with a disability:

- Use the same active listening skills and results focus that you would with other students
- Focus on abilities and potential rather than on inabilities
- Do not assist unless your offer of assistance has been accepted
- Treat people in a manner that is appropriate for their age
- Do not fuss. Over praising a person for completing a task is patronising
- Being overly solicitous is inappropriate
- Give people time and be prepared to explain things more than once
- Ask the students what they need and listen to what they say. When it comes to knowing what they need, they know best



What are the main issues facing students with disabilities in making the transition from school to college, training or work?

2.6 Communication

Communicating with students is one of the core skills most frequently used by guidance counsellors. Good communication is one of the most important ways of ensuring that problems, which arise, can be dealt with.

Some of the most important elements of communication include,

- Active listening
- Using gestures and body language
- Giving and receiving feedback
- Challenging and supporting
- Planning and problem solving

2.6.1 Initial Interview

In working with a student, counsellors are actively engaged in assessing and diagnosing what that student needs. Counselling usually begins by interviewing the student and carrying out some form of initial assessment of needs.

In carrying out an interview or assessment, you may want to:

- Include the student by sharing information so that they are part of the picture rather than outside it
- Be specific about what you want to know and what you want to say
- Check the person's understanding of what you are saying
- Use recent examples to illustrate
- Give as much positive feedback as you can
- Tell them when you don't know something but try to find out
- Encourage self-directed assessment of capabilities and areas for improvement
- Use open questions, - 'what do you need to do next?'
- Encourage problem-solving and decision-making

2.6.2 Dealing with Issues of Disclosure

Whether or not to disclose to a teacher, guidance counsellor or potential employer that he/she has a disability is a dilemma most students with disabilities will face at some stage. They worry that if they disclose, it will change how other people see them.

At this stage in their lives, students are just getting to know themselves and can be very conscious of how they look and what people think of them. Disclosure can therefore become a sensitive issue. Rather than disclose they have a disability, some people may try to cope on their own. This can sometimes result in deteriorating performance at school, disruptive behaviour and absenteeism. Having the necessary supports in place can often make the difference between success and failure.

Guidance counsellors may need to work with the student in considering the pros and cons of disclosure in their particular situation. It may sometimes be appropriate or beneficial to involve parents in these discussions.

There are no right or wrong answers about disclosure and the decision is the responsibility of the individual student.

It would be useful however to provide opportunities for some exploration and discussion on the pros and cons of disclosure:

Some Reasons for Disclosure

- Many employers have equal opportunities policies and are keen to employ people with disabilities.
- You are more likely to receive the supports and accommodations you need.
- It provides an opportunity to put things in a positive light – focusing on strengths, achievements and skills.
- It avoids giving false information in the application form which, if discovered, may cause you to lose your job.

Some Reasons against Disclosure

- You may feel that your disability has no impact on your ability to do the job
- You may feel that if you will automatically be rejected
- You might think that your disability is a private matter
- You might think that you will create additional expense for the employer

The counselling approach should be positive and focus on what the student can do rather than on what they have difficulty with.



CASE STUDY

Linda - Administrator

Linda completed a training course in Business and Administration and received her diploma last year. She was offered a work experience placement in the administration department of a financial services company.

Linda decided not to disclose the fact that she had epilepsy to her employers. Her seizures always occurred during the night so Linda knew that her work would not be affected.

Linda feels that she might not have been given the work experience opportunity if she had disclosed her condition to her boss.

Now that she has shown what she can do, Linda will have to think about whether or not to disclose her epilepsy if she is offered a permanent job with the company.

2.7 Initial Assessment

Identifying the sort of accommodations a person may require can make a tremendous difference in how successful the student will be in school or college.

The sort of accommodations students may require could include extra exam time; scribes or simply being given notes an advance of classes.

Identifying a student's needs can also help to inform and direct the type of advice and guidance a counsellor gives.

How do guidance counsellors go about facilitating a student in finding a course or job?

In much the same way as they would with any other student. Some of the conventional assessment tools might include:

- Questionnaires
- Interest inventories
- Aptitude tests
- Psychometric test

These methods may pose problems for some students with disabilities who have difficulties with reading, writing or filling in forms.

Alternative methods of assessing their needs and interests may need to be considered.

This might include:

- Group discussions where students can learn from each other's experience
- Information sessions
- Site visits
- Self appraisal
- Exercises
- Job shadowing
- Work experience



Identifying what a student needs can make a huge difference to their success at school or college. An initial needs assessment forms much of the foundation for advising and guiding the student.

2.8 Advice and Guidance

In delivering a service to students with disabilities, counsellors will need to:

- Be aware that students with disabilities are entitled to the same service as other students but may need additional support.
- Provide information and guidance in accessible ways and in accessible formats.
- Ensure that they don't discount certain jobs, courses or training because the student has a disability.
- Ensure that assistance is available to students who need it in order to use or interpret available information.
- Remember that some students with disabilities may not need any additional support.

Advice and guidance is the process of helping students explore a range of options, identifying the steps involved and relating that information to the person's own circumstances.

There are different ways of approaching the issue of giving advice and guidance to students with disabilities.

Generally speaking, however the counsellor will be involved in:

- Defining goals.
- Setting objectives.
- Identifying roadblocks.
- Developing effective strategies.
- Monitoring and feedback.
- Referral and placement.



Ask students what their needs are.

Don't make assumptions about what they need or think that you know best.



Profile

RONAN TYNAN – OPERA SINGER

From Kilkenny, Ronan was born with lower limb disabilities. When he was 20, both his legs had to be amputated as a result of an accident.



Ronan went on to compete in the Paralympic Games and between 1981 and 1984 won 18 gold medals and set 14 world records in track and field and equestrian events.

He was the first student with a disability at the National College of Education and earned a Doctor of Medicine Degree from Trinity College. From there, Ronan went on to pursue a career in music, both as a soloist and as a member of the Irish Tenors.

www.teachnet.ie

MODULE 3: WORKING WITH DISABILITY

Aims and objectives

After completing this module, you should be able to,

- Identify the relevant issues regarding a number of disabilities.
- Identify a range of strategies, which you can use in your work.
- Understand the issues concerning disclosure.

3.1 Students with Dyslexia

Dyslexia affects a person's ability to process language. It will have an impact on their ability to acquire one or more basic skills such as reading, writing, spelling or numbers. The majority of people with dyslexia find ways of overcoming their difficulties and achieve success in their lives. They show particular aptitude in areas such as engineering, science and draughtsmanship and spatial tasks in general.

Dyslexia is characterised by difficulties with:

- Short-term memory which is likely to be poor.
- Reading – the person will have experienced difficulty in learning how to read and is likely to go on to be a slow reader.
- Writing - the students will not have any difficulty in understanding or assimilating information but is likely to experience problems in translating that understanding in writing.

There are a number of possible interventions, which guidance counsellors can make when offering advice and guidance to students with dyslexia.

- Keep language and ideas simple and be prepared to explain things more than once.
- Adopt a practical, multi-sensory approach using videos, audio tapes, diagrams and other visual cues.
- Highlight patterns, themes and association of ideas.
- Encourage the student to make good use of the internet and to make site visits to areas of interest.
- Keep materials simple using large dark text on a light background.
- Help students to plan by breaking things down into small steps.
- Identify the strategies which have been effective in the past.
- Make good use of role play to give the student an opportunity to practice being interviewed.
- Focus on the students strengths and abilities.



Dyslexia is commonly found in people of average or above average intelligence.



CASE STUDY

Michelle – Office Worker

Michelle is 22 years old and has Cerebral Palsy. As a result, she has some problems with mobility and some mild involuntary movements.

Michelle uses crutches to get around and can move relatively quickly. She attended a mainstream school and was good at English, French, Home Economics, Irish and Geography.

Michelle left school four years ago and, at the time, did not have sufficient points to go to college. She got a job in an office but would like to return to school to study Home Economics and become a teacher.

Michelle is a keen sportswoman and has won a gold medal for sprinting in the Paralympics.

3.2 Students who are Blind or Visually Impaired

Blindness or visual impairment is a sensory disability where the level of impairment can vary greatly. Very few visually impaired people are totally blind and even people who are legally blind can have some vision. Vision loss has a significant effect on a person's capacity to carry out such everyday tasks as reading, writing and driving.

Some of the issues to bear in mind when communicating with a student who is blind or visually impaired include the following:

- Printed materials should also be available in alternative formats such as large print, Braille and audio tapes.
- Assistive technology can greatly assist the person in accessing information e.g., voice synthesisers which read text from the computer screen.
- The student may need mobility training if moving to a new educational or vocational site.
- Let the student know when you are entering or leaving the room.
- Introduce other people in the room.
- Ask the person if they would like to sit down. If necessary, indicate where he/she is to sit by placing his/her hand on the back of the chair.
- If asked to guide a blind person, you should:
 - Offer your arm instead of taking hold of theirs.
 - Let the person take your arm above the elbow.
 - Describe any hazards that are in the way, steps, corners, doorways etc.



Guide dogs not pets but are highly disciplined animals trained to carry out a job. Just like humans, they need to be left to do their job without distractions.

3.3 Students who are Deaf or Hearing Impaired

Being deaf or hearing impaired greatly affects a person's ability to communicate easily. This has a considerable impact on people's lives, including education, training and work. The following points should be noted when communicating with a student who is deaf or hearing impaired:

- Speak slowly and use natural pauses.
- Always face the person you are speaking to, don't turn away or cover your mouth with your hand.
- Explain the purpose of the meeting or e-mail an agenda in advance.
- Supplement speech by using gestures and body language.
- Communicate in writing if necessary.
- Prepare the student for interviews by discussing the available options.

3.3.1 Using a sign Language Interpreter

There may be occasions when the student needs to use a **sign language interpreter**. The role of the interpreter is to facilitate communication, not to offer advice or opinion. When using a sign language interpreter, there are a number of points to be noted:

- The person who is deaf will need time to process the information being translated.
- The interpreter needs to stand beside the speaker and close to any visual displays that are being used.
- New or unfamiliar names or topics should be written on a board or overhead projector.
- Translation will be considerably more efficient if both interpreter and student are given advance copies of the text being used.
- Never engage an interpreter in discussion while he/she is working.



A jobseeker with a hearing or speech impairment can apply for funding to have a sign language interpreter with them at job interviews.



CASE STUDY

Kate – Civil Servant

Kate graduated from UCC last year with a BSC in Social Science. She now works as a Research Officer in the Department of Finance.

Kate's job involves the management of large amounts of statistical data. Being deaf means that Kate needs to overcome some communication difficulties in the workplace. She finds e-mail an invaluable means communication with her colleagues.

Kate needed to have a sign language interpreter present during her job interview. She feels that it would also be essential to have an interpreter present during performance appraisals and promotion interviews.

3.4 Students with Physical Disabilities

Physical disabilities occur widely and can stem from a wide range of causes:

- Partial or total paralysis.
- Spinal injury.
- Amputation.
- Arthritis.
- Multiple sclerosis.
- Muscular dystrophy.
- Cerebral palsy.

Access is a major issue for students with physical disabilities who can experience difficulties in getting from one place to another. This is particularly the case in older buildings.

A person with reduced use of their hands may have difficulty in taking notes or turning pages. Fatigue can be a problem and concentration can be affected by pain relief medication.



Mark is a Leaving Cert student with a physical disability. He has some problems with balance and co-ordination. Mark thinks that he might like to pursue a career in the catering industry.

What sort of issues would a counsellor need to discuss with Mark and what type of recommendations might he/she make?

The following points should be noted when communicating with a person with a physical disability:

- Seat yourself at the level of the person's wheelchair when you talk to them.
- Do not lean on the wheelchair, as it is part of a person's personal space.
- Do not assume that assistance is needed – always ask.
- If a person needs assistance, ask them for directions as to how to assist. There is a correct way to manoeuvre a wheelchair.
- If the person uses a personal assistant, don't ask him/her questions, which are intended for the person with the disability.



Access is a major issue for students with physical disabilities and a great deal of energy can be expended in getting from one classroom to another.

3.5 Students with Mental Health Disabilities

Mental health is a key health issue and between 20% and 25% (over 700,000) of the Irish population will be affected at some stage of their life. Unlike other disabilities mental illness can be episodic or intermittent throughout a person's life.

Some people may experience just one episode of mental ill health before making a full recovery.

People with mental health difficulties can be socially disadvantaged through:

- Stigma.
- Low income.
- Interruptions to education or work.
- Fewer opportunities to learn new skills.
- Low expectations of others.

3.5.1 Types and of Mental Illness

Mental illness is a medical condition and refers to a specific group of illnesses. The illnesses are generally separated into two main categories:

Neurosis, which refers to a group of mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, personality or eating disorders.

Psychoses, the main categories of which are schizophrenia and bi-polar disorder (manic depression)

Some of the issues associated with mental health problems include the following:

- Medication can have an effect concentration and can result in drowsiness, blurred vision and thirst.
- Students may find it difficult to remain motivated and may have difficulty in meeting deadlines.
- Low self-esteem and lack of confidence are common difficulties.
- Stress can be a factor for some students.

The following points should be noted when communicating with a student with a mental health difficulty:

- Ask the person how you can best help.
- Be clear about what you expect.
- Agree clear, achievable goals with agreed time scales.
- Check that the student understands what is required.
- Avoid asking intrusive questions or being overly solicitous.
- Avoid becoming a therapist



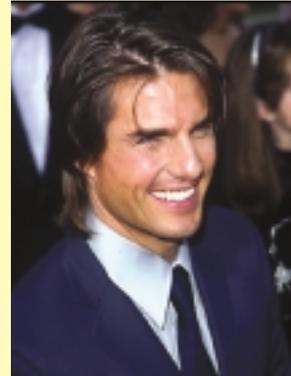
Many people have just one episode of mental ill health and go on to make a complete recovery.



Profile

TOM CRUISE – ACTOR

The eldest of four children, Tom was diagnosed as having dyslexia when he was about seven years of age. He struggled academically throughout school and entered a seminary when he was fourteen. He left shortly afterwards and enrolled in High School.



Tom continued to experience difficulties with his schoolwork throughout high school. He describes what it is like to be dyslexic:

‘I’d try to concentrate on what I was reading and then I’d get to the end of the page and have little memory of anything I had read. I would go blank; feel nervous, bored, frustrated, and dumb. I would get angry. My legs would actually hurt when I was studying. My head ached’.

Tom acted in two high school musicals before graduating. He chose acting as a career and went on to become one of the world’s most well known stars.

www.americandaily.com

MODULE 4: WORKING WITH PARENTS AND ADVOCATES

Aims and objectives

After completing this module, you should be able to,

- Identify the role of parents and advocates in the career guidance process.
- Understand the issues that need to be addressed when a student is making the transition from secondary school to third level education.
- Be aware of the student's rights in relation to accessing courses

4.1 Moving to Higher Education

Research has established that there is a strong relationship between third level education and successful employment outcomes. This relationship is even stronger when it comes to people with disabilities.

It is clear that all students will have a higher chance of getting employment if they have the transferable skills that a third level education gives. Guidance counsellors need to provide students with information about courses and career paths while they are still in secondary school.

It may be useful to pose the following questions in relation to transition to third level:

- What are the entry requirements for specific courses?
- Which institutions have the best resources?
- What supports are available for students with disabilities?
- Which institutions have the capacity to meet a student's specific needs?
- What accommodations are available?
- What curriculum changes are possible?
- Which institutions have the best career outcomes?



CASE STUDY

Jane – Student

Jane has been deaf since birth and uses sign language as her principal means of communication. Her family are very supportive and Jane lives with them in Dublin.

Jane received her education in a school for the deaf. She is currently studying for her Leaving Certificate and expects to do well. Jane is good at all practical subjects such as Science, Home Economics, Art, History and Geography but finds English difficult.

Jane will be seeking direct entry to St. Angela's College where she would like to do a teaching course.

4.2 What skills will students need?

Moving from secondary to third level means that the student will have to make adjustments to a new style of teaching and learning.

- Students will have to take more responsibility for their learning.
- Teaching staff will typically be less available than in secondary school.
- Lectures and tutorials will replace classes.
- Students will have greater freedom of choice and there will be less supervision.
- There will be more self-directed learning and individual study.
- Students will have more opportunities to develop their social skills and independence.



It is important that parents, teachers and guidance counsellors become involved in preparing the student for higher education at as early a stage as possible.

4.3 The role of parents and advocates

Parents are in daily contact with their child so are experts on what makes them unique. The encouragement and guidance of parents and advocates can make an exceptional difference to their child's future success.

Parents of students with disabilities need to:

- Pay attention to their child's interests and skills.
- Encourage them to plan ahead.
- Make use of community and school connections and resources.
- Participate in open days, school meetings, and relevant workshops.
- Provide opportunities for their child to make decisions and practice their skills.
- Be aware of their child's right to education and employment.
- Provide assessments or information on their child's disability and needs where it is relevant and appropriate.

Moving from school to college will present new challenges and adjustments. It is important to prepare for these lifestyle changes ahead of time.

Do the students need to develop any of the following adult life skills?

- Managing finance.
- Living independently.
- Making new relationships.
- Study skills.
- Self advocacy.
- Assertiveness.
- Planning and making decisions.
- Managing assignments.
- Time management.
- Goal setting.
- Research skills.
- Transport/independent travel

Students need to be actively involved in the planning for their future. They need to develop a clear understanding of their disability and the positive and negative impacts it has on their chosen course or career path in order to manage of the sort of accommodations and skill they will need to manage the transition to college and beyond.



Profile

CHRISTY BROWN – WRITER

Christy was born in Crumlin, Dublin, in 1932. One of thirteen surviving children, he suffered from cerebral palsy and was considered mentally disabled until he famously snatched a piece of chalk from his sister with his left foot.

His autobiography, *My Left Foot* was later expanded into the novel *Down All The Days* and became an international best seller, being translated into fourteen languages.

www.teachnet.ie

4.4 Accessing accommodations

Students with disabilities need to know about the nature of their disability and about the sort of supports they require.

They need to know that they will be taking on a much higher level of responsibility than in secondary school.

Part of that responsibility includes advocating for the accommodations and services they need.

Institutions vary as to the level of supports they offer and students may have to re-negotiate for supports each year. It is the student's responsibility to identify him/herself as having a disability.

According to the legislation, students with disabilities are entitled to equal educational courses and to reasonable accommodations.

Students need to know their rights in higher education and to be aware of when their rights are violated.

Through being involved in the decision-making and planning process, students will have the opportunity to learn about their rights and responsibilities.

Some accommodations needed can include the following:

- Curriculum changes.
- Extensions for assignments.
- Lowered desks or workstations.
- Scribes or readers.
- Lecture notes in advance.
- Permission to tape lectures.
- Extra time allowance for examinations.
- Sign language interpreter for interviews.
- Oral rather than written exams.
- Course materials available in alternative formats.
- Laptop computer.
- Screen reading software.
- Alternative forms of assessment.
- Exam papers on audiotape or Braille form.



Profile

OLAN MCGOWAN – BROADCASTER

Olan McGowan is a radio producer in RTE Radio 1 where he has worked on such programs as 5-7 Live, Saturday View and the Brenda Power Show. He also produces and presents Outside the Box, a weekly radio show on radio 1 which focuses on issues around disability and related topics.



Olan has had a wide and varied career which began following his graduation from DCU with a communications degree in 1988. Almost immediately, he began a 10-year stint as A&R Manager for Sony Music Ireland, a "dream job for any music-loving twenty-something with bags of energy."

Things changed following a serious spinal injury in 1995 when Olan was diving into the sea in South Dublin. Although he returned to Sony Music one year after his accident and signed the enormously successful Vard Sisters, a variety of factors led to his departure from the music business in 1999. He then entered the world of television, where he worked for three seasons on the RTE 1 TV show Open House for Tyrone Productions, with presenters Marty Whelan and Mary Kennedy. During that time, Olan was also member of a small question-second team for the for the Irish version of Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?, another show in the Tyrone Productions stable.

During 2002, Olan decided he needed another challenge and, while doing some freelance writing, was offered the role of National Advocacy and Media Coordinator at the Irish Wheelchair Association. This position saw him at the forefront of policy development in relation to people with physical disabilities.

Although only two years exclusively in the disability sector, Olan became a high profile political activist and advocate on behalf of all disabled people in Ireland and it was during this time he was offered the position in the presenter's chair of RTE Radio 1's Outside the Box. He made the move full-time into radio in April, 2005.

Olan's number one hobby is cooking and he has a particular affection for most things French, particularly the language which he speaks "reasonably fluently". He is also passionate about art and likes to keep track of up and coming Irish painters.

MODULE 5: WORKING WITH EMPLOYERS AND OTHER PROFESSIONALS

After completing this module, you should be able to,

- Identify your skills in relation to marketing and networking.
- Have some knowledge of relevant equality legislation.
- Understand the responsibilities of higher education institutions in relation to students with disabilities

5.1 Networking

Networking is an essential activity for guidance counsellors and one, which can greatly enrich their work. Proactive networking can lead to more effective placements or referrals. An increasing number of people with disabilities are entering higher education and gaining the necessary qualifications and skills for employment.

It is becoming increasingly important therefore for counsellors to establish links and relationships with:

- Teaching staff.
- Other organisations.
- Health Board professionals.
- Speech therapists.
- Special Education Support Staff.
- Occupational therapists.
- General Practitioners.
- Educational establishments.
- Psychiatrists.
- Employers and employer organisations.
- Disability Support Services.
- Psychologists.
- Specialist disability organisations.
- Vocational training centres.

This type of liaison will ensure that counsellors keep up to date on:

- Employment developments and opportunities.
- Legislation.
- Materials and resources.
- Available supports.

It also gives counsellors the opportunity to have a positive impact in relation to the referral and placement of people with disabilities.

Attendance at careers fairs and open days can be a useful way of making contacts and can give students and employers an opportunity to meet each other.

Building up a resource of information on employers who have are positive to disability and have clear equality practices, can greatly assist graduates in making career choices. A large number of Irish organisations have demonstrated their commitment to good equality practice in relation to the employment of people with disabilities and it is important have links with these and other employers.



It is important that Careers Guidance Counsellors in schools work together with Further Education Colleges and Higher Education Institutions to help ensure that prospective students consider disability-related issues that may have an influence on their subject and course choices.

5.2 Dispelling the Myths

The greatest barrier person with disability face when seeking employment is prejudice.

Some of the concerns an employer might have could include:

- Person might be a liability.
- Lack of confidence in dealing with disability.
- Health and safety might be compromised.
- Person may not be able to cope.
- Staff may have difficulty in accepting the employee



Research carried out by AHEAD showed that employers are most resistant to employing people who are blind, have a speech impairment or have mobility problems.

Some of the key statistics in relation to the employment of people with disabilities in Ireland show that:

80% have above average attendance records

90% have above average job performance

97% have an above average safety record

(EYPD Employers Guide, 2003)

Some of the questions employers frequently ask include the following:

- What if the person can't cope?
- What will it cost me?
- Will the person be out sick a lot?
- Will my insurance be affected?
- Will there be health and safety problems?

Employing a person with a disability should be no different from employing somebody else.

- Rather than looking at the person's disability, look at whether they have the requisite skills and abilities to do the job. This way you will avoid unlawful discrimination.
- There are often no additional costs to employing someone with a disability and there is financial assistance available for those employers who do incur costs.
- People with disabilities are not ill and it has been shown that they have an excellent attendance record.
- Insurance companies provide cover for employees with disabilities at no additional cost.
- The work environment should be safe for all employees and is a legal requirement.



It is estimated that over 70% of people with disabilities in Ireland are unemployed.

(EYPD 2003 Employers Guide)

Some of the steps an employer could take to facilitate the integration of a person with a disability into the workplace might include:

- Mentoring.
- Job shadowing.
- Regular monitoring and feedback.
- Buddy system.
- Disability awareness training for employees.



John has been on work experience in Flood's supermarket form the last two months. The manager is very happy with his work but is reluctant to employ John on a permanent basis.

The manager feels that there may be hidden disadvantages to employing a person with a disability although he is not sure what they might be.

How would you present a case to the employer on behalf of John?



Profile

JOHN LEANE – SENIOR ARCHITECTURAL TECHNICIAN



Born in 1975, John has been paralysed from the waist down as a result of an accident in 1995. He has been confined to a wheelchair since then. Having completed his rehabilitation, John returned to College where necessary modifications and accommodations were made available to him.

John graduated from Cork Institute of Technology in 1999 with a Diploma in Architectural Technology. He passed his exams with distinction and graduated

with the college's Portfolio of the Year award.

John is now employed with a firm of architects in Cork and has progressed to managing site projects. Outside of work, John enjoys track and field events and has sailed on the Tall Ships race to France.

5.3 Equality Legislation

The Careers Guidance Service frequently acts as an important link between students and colleges and between employers and prospective employees. In considering employing a person with a disability, employers may seek advice on their legal rights and responsibilities.

The term 'disabled' is used in its widest sense in Higher Education. It includes students with physical or sensory impairments and specific learning disabilities such as dyslexia or dyspraxia.

Legally, Higher Education Institutes have an obligation to support students who fall into the category of 'disabled'.

Employment legislation therefore has important implications for career guidance professionals and it would be advisable for the service to have up to date, relevant information on legislation available as a resource.

The legislation of greatest relevance to careers guidance services is:

- The Equal Status Acts 2000 – 2004
- The Employment Equality Act 1998 and 2004

5.3.1 The Equal Status Act 2004

Under the Act, discrimination is defined as the ‘treatment of a person in a less favourable way than another person’.

Providers of goods and services may not directly or indirectly discriminate on the basis of:

- Gender
- Marital status
- Family status
- Sexual orientation
- Religion
- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Membership of the Traveller Community

Disability is broadly defined as:

‘Including people with physical, intellectual, learning, cognitive or emotional disabilities and a range of medical conditions’. (Disability Resource Pack, The Equality Authority)

How is Discrimination Defined?

Direct discrimination, for the purposes of the Act, is defined as treating one person less favourably than another on any of the discriminatory grounds, including disability.

Educational establishments are prohibited, under the Act from directly or indirectly discriminating against people with disabilities in relation to:

- Admission
- Terms or conditions of admission
- Access to any course
- Access to any benefit or facility provided
- Expulsion of a student or any other sanction against a student



CASE STUDY

John – Employer

John owns a software development company employing fifteen people.

When starting up the company, John handled the recruitment and selection of staff himself. This was his first experience of interviewing an applicant with a disability.

‘I knew that there was equality legislation in place and was worried about saying or doing the wrong thing. I sought advice from the Equality Authority who was very helpful.’

I now realise how important it is to assess the individual’s ability to do the job, taking into account any reasonable adjustments that might be needed’.

5.3.2 The Employment Equality Act 2004

The Act outlaws discrimination on grounds of:

- Access to employment
- Conditions of employment
- Training or experience for, or in relation, to employment
- Promotion
- Classification of posts

The Act also has relevance to higher education and vocational training. Any course 'required for the carrying out of an occupational activity' is affected.

This would include third level courses, which have a vocational element, such as engineering, nursing and dentistry.



CASE STUDY

In 2002, an employee of fourteen years standing was admitted to hospital because of psychiatric problems. After treatment, the hospital psychiatrist deemed the patient fit to return to work on a phased basis.

The employer however was reluctant to have the employee back and eventually the employee resigned.

Under the Employment Equality Act, the employer failed to do all that was reasonable to facilitate the employee to return to work.

In February 2005, the Labour Court awarded the claimant a landmark sum of €57,900 on the grounds of discrimination on relation to his mental health problems.

(Equality Authority press release, 4/2/2005)

5.4 Reasonable Accommodation

The Employment Equality Act (EEA) obliges an employer to take appropriate measures or make reasonable accommodation to enable a person with a disability to:

- Have access to employment
- To participate or advance in employment
- To undertake training
- (Unless those measures would impose a ‘disproportionate burden’ on the employer.)

Appropriate measures may include the adaptation of premises or equipment, the distribution of tasks and the provision of training.

An employer is not obliged to provide any treatment or facility that a person could reasonably provide for himself.

The EEA includes in its definition of employers colleges and universities, which offer courses with a strong vocational emphasis such as medicine or dentistry.

The EEA defines an employer as:

‘... A person offering a course of vocational training.’

This includes course providers, such as Institutes of Technology, Colleges and Universities.

Section 16 (3) states that an employer: ‘Shall do all that is reasonable to accommodate the needs of a person who has a disability by providing special treatment or facilities...’



**The Equality Authority describes reasonable accommodation as:
‘A simple, easily achievable part of quality customer service and ordinary common courtesy’**

5.4.1 Responsibilities of Educational Establishments

The legislation states that an educational establishment will discriminate against a student with a disability if it does not do all that is reasonable to accommodate that student.

This accommodation can include the provision of special treatment or facilities without which support it would be impossible or unduly difficult for the person to avail of the service provided by the college. Section 42 of the Act deals with vicarious liability.

In the example of an individual lecturer, any action undertaken by a lecturer in the course of his or her employment can be deemed an action of the employer. This means that the college is responsible for such actions and if the lecturer refuses to provide a required support, then proceedings can be brought against the college.



The Employment Equality Acts specifically allows measures intended to facilitate the integration of people with disabilities into employment

5.5 Financial Assistance for Employers and Employees

In April 2005, the Tanaiste Mary Harney launched Access Ability, a programme that aims to create at least 300 jobs for people with disabilities. The programme provides a one-stop shop offering advice and assistance on disability employment matters. The service is available to employers, employees and job seekers. Application forms and information are available from FAS regional offices.

The following assistance and grants are available:

- Disability Awareness Training Support Scheme for employees.
- Job Interview Interpreter Grant for job seekers with speech or hearing impairments. There is no limit on the number of interviews a person can attend with an interpreter.
- Workplace / Equipment Adaptation Grant payable towards the cost of adapting premises or equipment. A maximum grant of €6348 is available.
- Employment Support Scheme offers financial support to employers of people with disabilities whose productivity levels are between 50% and 80% of other workers.
- Employee Retraining Grant to assist employers to retain employees who become disabled through sickness or injury.
- Personal Reader Grant for employees who are blind or visually impaired and need assistance with job related reading
- Employers PRSI Exemption Scheme available from the Dept. of Social, Community and Family Affairs. The scheme is available to employers who recruit a person with a disability to work a minimum of 20 hours per week. The employer is exempt to that person's PRSI contribution for the first two years of employment.

- Back to Work Allowance payable in addition to wages for social welfare recipients who return to work for a minimum of 20 hours per week.
- Retention Grant to encourage employers in the private sector in retaining existing employees who develop a disability while in employment.
- Revenue Job Assist gives employers double wage deduction in their accounts for a period of three years if they recruit a person who has been unemployed for a period of twelve months or more.

(Access Ability)

USEFUL CONTACTS AND ADDRESSES

AHEAD, Association for Higher Education Access and Disability,

Post Box 30, East Hall, UCD, Carysfort Avenue, Blackrock, Co Dublin.

Tel: 01 7164396

Email: ahead@iol.ie Website: www.ahead.com

Arbour Hill Prison Brailing Unit,

Arbour Hill, Dublin 7

Tel: 01 671 9333

Irish Sign Link,

25 Clyde Road, Dublin 4

Tel: 01 608 0437

Email: signlink@indigio.ie

AWARE (Fighting Depression),

72 Lower Leeson St., Dublin 2

Tel: 01 661 7211

Website: www.aware.ie

Brainwave, Irish Epilepsy Association,

249 Crumlin Rd., Dublin 12

Tel: 01 455 7500

Email: info@epilepsy.ie

Equality Authority,

2 Clonmel St., Dublin 2

Tel: 01 417 3333

Website: www.equality.ie

FÁS,

27-33 Upp. Baggot St., Dublin 4

Tel: 01 6070500

Email: info@fas.ie Website: www.fas.ie

Iarnrod Eireann,

Access and Liaison Officer

Tel: 01 703 2634

Email: Melanie.mcdonagh@irishrail.ie Website: www.iarnroideireann.ie

Bus Eireann,

Broadstone, Dublin 7

Tel: 01 830 2222

Website: www.buseireann.ie

IBEC,

Confederation House, 84/86 Lower Baggot St.,

Dublin 4

Tel: 01 605 1500

Email: info@ibec.ie

Irish Wheelchair Association,

Aras Cuchulain, Blackheath Drive, Clontarf, Dublin 3

Tel: 01 8186400

Email: ids@indigo.ie Website: www.iwa.ie

Mental Health Ireland,

Mensana House, 6 Adelaide St., Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin

Tel: 01 284 1166

Email: info@mentalhealthireland.ie Website: www.mentalhealthireland.ie

National Association for Deaf People,

35 North Fredrick St., Dublin 1.

Tel: 01 872 3800

Email: nad@iol.ie Website: www.nadp.ie

National Council for the Blind in Ireland,

PV Doyle House, 45 Whitworth Rd., Drumcondra, Dublin 9

Tel: 01 8307033

Email: ncbi@iol.ie Website: www.ncbi.ie

National Disability Authority,

25 Clyde Road, Dublin 4

Tel: 01 6080400

Email: nda@nda.ie Website: www.nda.ie

Schizophrenia Association of Ireland,

Fitzwilliam Place, Dublin 2

Tel: 01 676 1988

Email: info@sirl.ie

The National Association for the Deaf,

30 Blessington St., Dublin 7

Tel: 01 860 1910

Email: ids@indigo.ie Website: www.irishdeafsociety.org

Vantastic,

196 Howth Rd., Killester, Dublin 3

Tel: 01 833 0014

Email: info@vantastic.ie Website: www.vantastic.ie

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www.workway.ie