



Community Employment Partnership

BELONGING MATTERS & ROTARY
EMPLOYMENT PARTNERSHIP



Information for Participants and Families

How does the Community Employment Partnership (CEP) work?

The Community Employment Partnership (CEP) is currently funded by the Department of Social Services to trial a different approach to assisting people with intellectual disability and Autism to find paid work. It is different to traditional disability employment agencies.

CEP uses 3 main ways or approaches to assist people with an intellectual disability and Autism to find a job in mainstream employment -

1. A customised employment approach;
2. A network approach;
3. A capacity building and empowerment approach

1. Customised Employment approach

People with an intellectual disability are often locked out of competitive approaches to employment e.g., responding to an advertised position and competing with many other job applicants. A Customised Employment approach challenges traditional methods of employment. The approach means trying to find a job that best meets the person's strengths, abilities, and interests.

There are 2 main components of customised employment; Discovery and Job Development.

Discovery is a process to get to know each participant in the project, their strengths, skills and interests. This often means talking to people and observing the person. Information from this process will help us to match the person's strengths with available job opportunities e.g., through our connections with Rotarians.

Job Development means speaking and negotiating with businesses to explore business gaps and how particular roles might be customised to match a person's skills, strengths and interests, so that it is a good fit. This could include job carving, where an employee might do some parts of an existing role, or developing a new role based on a person's abilities. In each case, job development needs to be mutually beneficial to both the employee and employer.

The CEP project develops open and inclusive employment opportunities, with an expectation of award wages, rather than supported employment, volunteering or work experience.



3/178 Boronia Road
Boronia Vic 3155



(03) 9739 8333



0432 189 323



cepe@belongingmatters.org

2. Network approach

Many employment opportunities are found through networks and having contacts. Often people who have an intellectual disability and Autism do not have large networks. The aim of the CEP is to use a network approach rather than 'cold calling' or applying to job advertisements. This means we are tapping into the natural relationships and business connections that might exist in the person's network or the network of a community organisation. For example, we have a partnership with several Rotary clubs and we can tap into their vast business networks. A network approach is different from traditional disability employment agencies. It seeks to help the community think about the employment of people with a disability and how they or their networks could assist.

3. Co-design and Capacity Building

The work of the CEP is guided by the principles of customised employment and, as a new project, it's important that the knowledge, skills and direction of the project is shared with people with a disability and families. After receiving feedback from families, we have decided to create a CEP Advisory Committee, in which members can share information, learn together through course material and guest speakers, and have a say in the CEP project.

Cost of being assisted by CEP

The CEP is currently funded by the Department of Social Services. There is no cost to participate. However, since this is an exploratory project, we cannot guarantee you will find a job.

The CEP Process

Initial enquiry. Usually conducted over the phone, we briefly discuss the CEP project and your employment goals. We can tell you more about the project. If we think we can help you and you like the idea of the project we will arrange another meeting.

First meeting. We will meet with you and your family/supporters in person or over Zoom to discuss your employment goals, plans for the future, as well as how things look for you right now. We will also discuss the CEP project aims, principles and how it works. We can then decide if the project is good mutual fit.

Invitation to learn and have a say in the CEP project. You and/or your family/advocate will be invited to become a member of the CEP Advisory Committee and attend monthly meetings. At the meetings we will gain and share information, learn together through course material or webinars, and have a say in the CEP project.

Contact us to learn more about the Belonging Matters' Community Employment Partnership

How do CEP mentors work alongside you?

- **Information you may have.** We will ask you to forward us any documents that talk about your skills or goals, school or work reports, videos of you working or completing tasks. You may already have done some discovery in the past or worked with your school or an employment specialist about your employment goals, you may also already have a resume. This is all fantastic and we would love for you to give us copies of all the information.
- **Commence discovery process.** This will be over several sessions with you in your home and in your local area, where you like to spend time. We want to get to know you well, and explore your life experiences with you. We also want to look at how your network can support you on your employment journey.
- **Meet with people who know you well.** We talk with people who know you well or have worked with you in the past to contribute positively to what your strengths, interests, and preferred environments are. It could be current or former employers, former teachers, friends, or family.
- **Observations.** We will arrange a time with you to observe you in your regular activities, as well as at work. This gives us an understanding of how you do things, learn new things, and engage with others.
- **Job skills analysis.** With you, we will identify key areas of interest for work, which may include preferred industries or completing tasks.
- **Identifying networks.** We will assist you to identify and map out your networks.
- **Work profile.** We will put together a work profile, resume and postcard with you. These will be different to ones you have developed previously as they are for Rotarians and their business contacts who are involved in the CEP project.

Working with Businesses

Through various networks, for example Rotary, we aim to connect with businesses who might be interested in talking to us further about the project. When we have a connection through a network referral, CEP mentors will work with each workplace to explore potential roles.

There are a number of steps in this process:

1. **Appreciative enquiry** – CEP Mentors will meet with the business to talk to them further about the CEP project and learn about their business through appreciative enquiry; what they do, how do they do it, what roles might be possible, what is not getting done, where they want their business to be in a few years' time, etc.

Contact us to learn more about the Belonging Matters' Community Employment Partnership

2. **Workplace information collection** – CEP Mentors will look at the culture of the workplace. They will talk to and observe those that work there, and look for roles.

3. **Job planning** – CEP Mentors will consider CEP job seekers. We will ask – Are any of our participants a good match for a workplace? Are there roles we can customise in the workplace match a person’s skills and interests? Does the environment suit the person? If there is a potential match, CEP Mentors will work further with the workplace around customising the roles, identifying who could teach the roles in the workplace, and how would they be supported in the workplace and where the workplace will need support from us to do this.

4. **Preparing to work**—the CEP Mentor will set up a meeting or interview with you and the workplace. We will ask for questions the employer might want to ask you beforehand to help you prepare for meeting with them. They will already know quite a bit about you, your skills, and interests, so it will be a less formal interview. The CEP Mentor will attend and support you at the meeting/interview as they will have the best overview of the business and customised roles. We do not recommend that others attend at this stage as it can be overwhelming for businesses.

5. **Trial or commence work**—The CEP Mentors provide initial support to you and the workplace. The CEP Mentors will identify training opportunities and co-workers in the workplace to train you in regard to the role and tasks to be completed. We do this because the work place has the expertise in teaching the task – we are there to support the workplace to train you. We will also look for ways you can contribute and become part of the workplace culture and social occasions.

6. **Support in the workplace**—By identifying and working with key supporters in the workplace, our aim is for the workplace to support you, just as it does with other employees. The CEP Mentors will assess if any additional tools or supports could be an advantage and discuss this with the business, you, and your family/advocate. We will be in regular contact with the workplace so any concerns can be addressed early.

Contact us to learn more about the Belonging Matters' Community Employment Partnership

Given the CEP Mentors have established relationships with various networks and businesses, it is important that they remain the primary source of contact for businesses. If too many people are involved it can be confusing and messy for businesses. For people in business this can lead to a reluctance to offer or continue employment.

The process of identifying potential employers through a networking approach and customising a role can take longer than expected.

We hope that from participation in the project you will have the confidence to look within your own networks for potential roles. If you are already negotiating with a business interested in employing you but they are unsure how to do this, we are happy to meet with them and explore any potential roles that may be suited to you. We can also provide mentoring to businesses around making workplaces more inclusive.

Please note, as we are not an employment or job support agency, we will not contact businesses directly about job opportunities (cold calling) without a prior connection through Rotary and/or direct interest from a business in the project.

Questions?

If you have any questions please contact Patricia Wilson cep@belongingmatters.org or by phone 0432 189 323



Contact us to learn more about the Belonging Matters' Community Employment Partnership