

Another Exciting Newsletter
By
Jeff Symons

Hi everyone,

I hope everyone had a good holiday season and can't wait to get back to work. Over the holiday I made some New Years Resolutions and also did some thinking (I know that's unusual) and had some discussions with the Department of Rehabilitation about some issues and concerns.

1. One of my resolutions was to find better ways to meet the needs of the counselors and clients.

When out on the road I often get asked by counselors and others about how to adjust or fix some piece of equipment is not working properly. Often it is a very simple fix. Some of the ergonomic chairs over time will become out of adjustment even though you have not touched the controls. The backs may slip down from constant use and may no longer provide adequate lumbar support but rather very low back support or upper gluteus support. I began to think that other clients, counselors and employees may have similar issues. While I have done a number of injury prevention type ergonomic assessments for the Department of Rehabilitation I realized that with this economy we are looking for ways to save money (although I think everyone should have an ergonomic assessment but I realize that I am biased in this area). One thought I had to help solve this problem is that people can always contact me and probably on the phone I can instruct them on how to possibly adjust a chair or other device. Another option would be to e-mail me a picture of the worksite and person (side view) and then I could contact the individual and discuss their setup and some possible options. At this point I do not see charging for the service unless I get inundated with calls and e-mails. I also have a web cam set up on my computer at my office and if there are web cams at other offices we could possibly set up a time to do a remote evaluation.

2. Another resolution was to get the word out about the types of assistive technology services available (not just mine).

I am looking into getting a website together and make some brochures. I also realize there are a large number of new counselors who may not be aware of the types of services offered. I would be more than happy to come to a meeting to show them the types of services that are available. Counselors are always welcome to any assessment so they can understand the process. I have tried not to make this newsletter a way of necessarily making more business for myself but more to help counselors make the best decisions for their clients. If there is someone else who can provide better service or training I would let you know that. For example, I do not specialize in working with blind individuals but, there are places that do, such as Assistive Technology Services and Sensory Access Foundation. There are a number of good evaluators for assistive technology and ergonomic equipment. I have found that counselors often use an evaluator in one area and

do not realize that they can also provide other types of assessments as well. I do a lot of ergonomic and assistive technology assessments for people with orthopedic issues but also I have worked with a number of hearing impaired individuals and have access to different assistive listening devices for them to try. Custom devices can be designed and fabricated when no commercially available product will meet the clients needs. Sometimes a commercially available device can be modified to meet their needs. Recently, a client with one arm who was attending a culinary school and needed to have a cutting board modified to meet her needs. One was found that could be modified and a local plastic shop was able to make the modifications needed.

3. I am trying to be more environmentally friendly.

In an effort to be more environmentally friendly/greener I have been e-mailing my reports and invoices to the counselors and not sending a hard copy unless requested. I was wondering how this was working out for the counselors and if you had any other suggestions. FYI we do recycle and compost.

I recently have changed my rates this New Year. I have been doing this now for six months on my own and I have contacted other individuals who do assistive technology evaluations in the Bay Area and the others here in Sacramento. Their charges range from \$100-\$150 per hour. My new rates are \$110 per hour for evaluation and \$75 per hour for travel. If anyone has any input or ideas I would gladly welcome your thoughts and opinions. One issue that I have had is that some payments happen very quickly and others can take several months. I do not know if there is anything I can do to expedite this process but am willing to entertain any suggestions.

As Always

Thanks,

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