Post-Secondary: Careers and Preparation for College / University Article Selections

K. Wolffe. "Addressing Employers' Safety Concerns About Workers With Visual Impairments". <u>Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness,</u> April 1998

"It is imperative that safety issues relevant to any job in question *be addressed -- ideally by the person with the visual impairment. ...* clients must be prepared to 'show and tell' how they will function safely in the workplace."

"By volunteering information about how he or she would handle crisis situations, an applicant strengthens the employer's perception of competence."

"The applicant will have to demonstrate how he or she travels - unassisted in the environment with either a long cane or a dog guide and how he or she works with an orientation and mobility instructor to learn specific routes. The key in this area is for the applicant to convince the employer that he or she can follow safety guidelines without placing anyone at risk."

"… visually impaired applicants [need] to be prepared to demonstrate the skills and adaptive techniques that they will use to prevent accidents and handle emergencies. Employers are more likely to put aside prejudices they may have if they can see for themselves that hiring a visually impaired applicant will not be a risky business."

K. Wolffe. "Preparing People with Visual Impairments for Work". <u>Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness,</u> February 1998

"Today's employers want not only the discrete skills required for a particular job, but also an understanding of other cultures, the ability to speak multiple languages, computer skills, work experience, evidence of achievements, dependability, and flexibility."

"Employers want workers who will feel comfortable with people

from other countries and cultures. . . . What does this mean for people who are visually impaired? To prepare for the global marketplace, their curriculum should include geography, sociology, civics, history, government economics, and anthropology. They should be encouraged to travel and immerse themselves in the culture of the places they visit (or read about other cultures and customs …"

"The global marketplace has also made it attractive to employers if jobseekers can speak multiple languages. . . . [visually impaired] students may want to choose at least one language other than English that is fairly common in their area and one that is more exotic."

"Most jobs have computers as primary work tools and employers expect that new workers will have basic computer literacy skills. .. . Educators in the field should encourage their students to learn as much as possible about computer hardware and software programs while they are
in school."

"More important even than skills or credentials is work experience. For people with visual impairments, experience validates ability. Experience in either paid or volunteer work is one of the most important steps youths and adults with visual impairments can take to promote their careers. Through work experience, they can secure references from people who have seen them in action and can verify for prospective employers
their worth as employees."

"… evidence of prior ability to get tasks accomplished lends an applicant further credibility. If applicants do not have work experience, they should be encouraged to document their successes from school or community experiences." (eg. working on a school fund-raiser)

"Job seekers must understand that evidence of their willingness to work hard and stay at a task . . . is a strong selling point . . . Workers with visual impairments need to be shown the importance of employers' expectations regarding dependability."

"The lesson service providers can teach people with visual impairments is to develop as many skills as possible. . . . Versatile and flexible workers are able to do their jobs and the jobs of other workers in the same area"

A. Crudden and L. McBroom. "Barriers to Employment: A Survey of Employed Persons Who Are Visually Impaired". <u>Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness,</u> June 1999

Abstract: A national mail survey of 176 employed persons who are blind or have low vision found that employment barriers included attitudes of employers and the general public; transportation problems; and lack of access to print, adaptive equipment, and accommodations. Strategies to overcome barriers appear to be addressed on an individual basis, rather than from a macro or policy perspective.

"one barrier to employment is … difficulty with transportation … Other often-cited barriers include the lack of general awareness of visual impairments or the public's and employers' attitudes toward persons who are blind or have low vision . . . the absence of role models"

"Prospective employers with whom I interviewed . . . seemed to be skeptical about whether a blind person could cope effectively with .. . travel"

"[It was] hard to convince potential employers that I wouldn't be a safety hazard in the lab"

[My biggest barrier to employment was] filling out the application."

[My biggest barrier to employment was] processing an enormous amount of printed material."

,'.',suggestions about how to handle the issue of blindness in application letters and [friends] provided verbal and written recommendations"

"You must be flexible and not complain too much."

"From as far back as I can remember, I have never had any doubt of my ability to make a valuable contribution"

"I have an old-fashioned work ethic."

" I have placed great emphasis on education. I find that highly educated people don't care about how many heads you have, as long as you can get the job done."

"The most frequently mentioned suggestions [for visually impaired persons] were related to issues of determination, persistence, and individual independence."

"Stand up for yourself and your right to try. Be realistic enough to know when you cannot do something. Be assertive, but not overbearing. Take constructive criticism."

"Confidence in yourself and [your] abilities is important. Have a friendly positive attitude (leave your negative comments and pessimism at home). Initiate ideas and activities. Accept constructive feedback and work to improve on these areas."

"Apply yourself completely to all training opportunities."

"Learn a skill well so you will be confident and assertive finding work."

"Network."

"Get to know successful blind people."

B. O'Day. "Employment Barriers for People with Visual Impairments". Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness, October 1999

Abstract: This study of perceived employment barriers of 20 unemployed adults who are legally blind found that the participants experienced personal, societal, and programmatic barriers to employment. It also found that some participants were actively seeking work, some were resigned to their unemployment, and others were looking for work but losing hope. Thus, policies must address both the barriers to employment and the specific needs of each group of unemployed people with visual impairments.

" The participants cited the lack of job experience and deficient marketable skills as personal barriers to employment. During adolescence and early adulthood, many participants received mixed messages: They were told that they could do any job they chose, but received no practical, concrete guidance on reaching their employment goals. Almost all the participants were encouraged to concentrate on their studies, rather than to get part-time jobs during high school and college and thus

lost the opportunity to gain valuable work experience that could have been a foundation for an employment history. Breaking into the job market after high school or college proved to be extremely difficult. As a result, most of the participants did not have the amount and level of experience commensurate with their age because of extended periods of unemployment."

". . . significant societal barriers --- barriers that occur when individuals with disabilities interact with their surroundings. These barriers have little to do with the individual or the disability, but are endemic to the social environment. People with disabilities must confront these barriers, irrespective of their personal attributes or skills; the barriers cannot be overcome by individual perseverance, acquisition of skills, or experience. Societal barriers include negative public attitudes about disability, social stigma, discrimination, the lack of access to technology, and the lack of public transportation. . . . limited expectations, stereotypes, and misunderstanding . . . [a participant reported that] an employer asked job-related questions of the person who had driven him to the appointment ... [a participant] recounted an incident in which he was not hired because an employer did not think he could get to the bathroom or cafeteria independently"

"During job interviews, employers asked the participants a host of disability-related questions that were not related to performing the jobs for which they were applying or, worse, had significant concerns but failed to verbalize them."

"Traveling to the job was also mentioned as a barrier. . . . [some participants] lacked the travel skills and self-confidence to use public transportation or negotiate busy intersections."