

Idaho IL Newsletter

Independent Living - Celebrating Life Your Way!



A New Service Animal Video is Complete!

This past summer, an opportunity to prepare a video on the importance of service dogs helping those with PTSD presented itself. We brought in veterans Louis Belluomini and Naithan McKinney to hear their stories of how a service dog changed their life, and the importance of being able to take their dog to work with them. Now the video is complete and can be seen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KunIUcuBvCY>

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LOCAL EVENTS - Please join us!

International Day of Persons with Disabilities is December 3rd!!

December 4 - Tall Cop Says Stop

Moscow, ID

Fairfield Inn, 8:00 am - 3:00 pm Check in at 7:30 am

December 4 - Reel Movie Mondays - Soul Surfer

Moscow, ID

Kenworthy Theater, 7:00 pm Doors open at 6:30

December 6 - Open House - International Day of Persons with Disabilities

Lewiston, ID DAC NW Office

2:00 pm - 4:00 pm

December 6 - Open House - International Day of Persons with Disabilities

Post Falls, ID DAC NW Office

10:00 am - 2:00 pm

December 13 - Lunch & Learn - Advance Medical Directives

Moscow, ID Latah County Fairgrounds, Grange Building

12:00 noon - 1:00 pm

SAVE THE DATE - TOOLS FOR LIFE MARCH 5TH MOSCOW ID

HOLIDAY CARD MAKING PARTY

Thursday, December 14th

3:30 pm - 5:00 pm

DAC NW, Moscow Office, 505 N Main St.

Join Disability Action Center, Vocational Rehab, and Latah Library to make holiday cards, all supplies provided! We are celebrating International Day of Disability and making cards to give our disabled veterans. For every card you make for a veteran, you can make one for yourself! Parents and children welcome. Cookies and hot cocoa provided.



FROM THE EDITOR

Complications of dealing with technology

You may notice a new look to the newsletter this month.

No one I know would call me “techie.” In fact I didn’t really do anything with computers until a decade ago. But necessity requires it today.

Some of it makes a lot of sense. By creating content for social media that is relevant, engaging and informative, you increase your readership or “followers.”

And data isn’t just a buzzword. To collect data in our line of work is necessary for grant reporting. And once you have that data, you need to learn to analyze it. And then you may need to make decisions relative to the data you analyzed. See where I’m going with this?

Don’t forget the website! We have several websites and still need to build another one. Websites serve as the initial gateway into a company. So housekeeping is necessary. Nothing is worse than looking at a website and noticing outdated information on it. So I had to learn basic website functions in order to stay on top of it.

Technology affects every aspect of our life, from social sites, to communication, to how we access information. So I have learned to roll with it.

For example, our computers just got updated. So that means learning all the changes that happen



to the programs I use on a daily basis. And the one I was using to produce the newsletter was Word. Suddenly my newsletter template and the new program aren’t compatible. Things move around on the page, colors are way off, and some things just plain don’t show up!

Which brings me back to the new look for the newsletter. Now seemed like as good a time as any to upgrade our look to a new template. Same great stuff, just laid out a little differently. A new program to work with means learning all the little nuances, or as I like to call them, “secret key strokes”. You know what I mean. Just moving your mouse around on the page and you click something and *EVERYTHING* moves around!

So maybe this newsletter is a day or two late, but I had a learning curve to figure out. I hope you like the new look. And if you have anything for future newsletters, let me know. We featured 19 guest editors over the last year alone! This newsletter is a great opportunity to give voice to information that helps people with disabilities live independently!

You can email me at vicki@dacnw.org

Vicki Leeper



NEWS FROM DAC NW

DAC NW HELPS BOY SCOUT TROOP 460 EARN THE DISABILITY AWARENESS MERIT BADGE

When Troop 460 called and said they could use DAC's expertise in helping with their merit badge we jumped at the chance. Working with today's youth assures a continued interest in Independent Living for the future.

A complicated subject to really cover in a short time, it was decided to break it up over several meetings. At the first meeting Mark Leeper, the Executive Director of DAC, spoke about the services we provide. From helping with information and referrals, to equipment loans, to helping someone learn to advocate for accessibility, he covered it all.

The scouts helped set up a wheelchair obstacle course so the boys could see why the ADA is important. Even something as small as a non-bevelled threshold can make it difficult for someone with mobility issues to access a business. The scouts enjoyed trying their hand at negotiating doorways, carpeting, and uneven surfaces with a manual chair. All 27 boys got a chance to try it out.

Other groups used their smart phones to map the church where meetings are held. That way the church could be listed on the



BluePath website. It was interesting for them to find out that even as a modern church it still had inaccessible bathrooms. And only the main floor was reachable by someone using a wheelchair. Several other floors of the church were inaccessible due to stairs.

Their next meeting will cover Assistive Technology and other topics. Staff person Mellowdee Brooks will be bringing cool technology for the scouts to see demonstrated.

Mostly, we helped the boys learn how to effectively interact with others that may have disabilities. Since some disabilities are "invisible" such as autism, a lot relies on the boys being kind. And that is a part of the boy scout motto!

Helping YOU take Action!

NEWS FROM



BUSTING MYTHS ABOUT HIRING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

As the subject of disability inclusion in the workforce becomes more prevalent, let's take a closer look at some of the myths surrounding the hiring of people with disabilities.

1. Cost to accommodate is too exorbitant.

According to national research on this topic, most accommodations cost less than \$500. Some real estate accommodations, such as widening doors, installing ramps, etc exceed that cost. However, these are upgrades that also increase the accessibility of your business for customers too! Often things like lighting and noise considerations for people on the autism spectrum are low cost.

2. More apt to require and exceed sick days.

Studies show people with disabilities had fewer scheduled absences than those without, and fewer unscheduled absences. One explanation is that employees with disabilities have already established routines and focus on their health.

3. Too difficult/controversial for employers to take disciplinary action.

Disabled employees should be treated the same as abled-bodied employees - with respect and dignity; as well as given opportunities for advancement and coaching when required.

4. Employers are more likely to be sued.

American society has become more litigious, and people are more apt to sue if they believe they have been wronged. However suing an employer is not the first thing people with disabilities think about. It's difficult to find a job as a disabled candidate, this means they are not quick to leave an organization. Most would rather work in an organization that is fair and equitable.

5. People with disabilities make others uncomfortable.

People naturally feel uncomfortable with people they don't know, so it can be challenging. The most important points are to be respectful, approachable, qualified, presentable, and business oriented.

6. Unable to meet performance standards.

If an individual can't meet performance standards, that's a problem regardless of whether they have a disability or not. That's why accommodations are so important. Address any problems as quickly as possible, and find ways to help them improve. This has nothing to do with having a disability, but instead is being professional.

7. More likely to have an accident at work.

Again, data says this is not true. People with disabilities usually know their weaknesses and avoid danger and accidents. Safety comes first, across the board.

In some cases, time to train or to make an environment accessible can be longer than for an able-bodied employee. But it's worth it to question whether the person is qualified and competitive. Allowing for reasonable time to train should be acceptable, and sends the right message throughout the business. If you want help concerning requirements for accommodations from the ADA contact me.

NWADACENTER.ORG/IDAHO

Dana Gover, MPA, and ACTCP Certification

ADA Training & Technical Assistance

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NEWS FROM LIFE INC.

Long-term disability vs short-term disability explained

By Chris Walters

You can find dozens of "long-term disability vs short-term disability" pages on the web, but most of them are about as exciting as watching bread bake. The problem is that disability insurance, like every other financial product, can be fine tuned a dozen different ways until it fits your needs exactly—but explaining all of those options at once is overkill if you're approaching the topic for the first time.

So let's step back and answer the big questions, like: What is it? How is it different from short-term disability? And do I even need it?

1 - Long-term disability kicks in after your short-term disability and employer benefits end—there's no overlap.

They're separate insurance products because they cover entirely separate periods. Short-term disability insurance covers the first few weeks or months when you can't work, but then it ends. Long-term disability insurance starts paying at some point after that and lasts much longer, because it's designed to protect your income if you're disabled for more than a couple of months. The trick to buying the right amount of disability insurance is to make sure you don't leave a gap in coverage between when your short-term policy benefits end and your long-term policy benefits begin, because the bigger the gap, the longer you'll have to go without any replacement income. And no, it's not possible to stack the policies to achieve a higher total payment amount, because most long-term disability insurance policies won't pay until you've exhausted any short-term or employer benefits first.

2 - Long-term disability costs more than short-term disability because it provides better protection.

Long-term disability insurance lasts longer and can be customized more than short-term disability insurance, which makes it more expensive. But it's actually more valuable than short-term disability insurance, for reasons which we'll explain below.

So how much does it cost? Like life insurance, the price is based in part on things like your age, sex, occupation (as in, "how dangerous is your job?"), the length of the coverage period, and how much of your salary you want to replace. Generally speaking, though, you should expect to pay between 1-3% of your salary. So for example if you make \$50k a year, your premiums could run between \$50-\$125 per month.

However, the amount you end up paying also depends on whether some or all of your long-term disability coverage is purchased through a group employer plan—especially if your employer helps pay for it.

3 - You can buy long-term disability on your own, but short-term disability is only available through your employer.

Some employers - especially larger employers - offer long-term disability insurance. If your employer does, make sure you're enrolled! Employer sponsored long-term disability is good-value coverage because you'll benefit from group rates and you won't have to deal with medical underwriting. It's even possible in some cases to turn a group long-term policy into a

NEWS FROM LIFE

Long Term vs Short Term Disability (Cont'd)

private long-term disability policy if you leave or change jobs (this is called "portability"). However, the majority of private sector workers don't have access to employer-sponsored long-term disability insurance. So the most likely scenario is that you'll buy long-term disability insurance on your own. (And we can help get you up to speed on how to find the best value with our long-term disability shopping guide.)

Short-term disability insurance is only available through your employer. Your employer may or may not offer it (but if you live in California, Hawaii, New Jersey, New York or Rhode Island, your employer might be required to provide short-term disability coverage). If your employer doesn't offer short-term disability coverage, you can't buy a policy on your own. You'll have to self-insure with savings for the 1-4 months that short-term disability insurance would cover.

4 - Long-term disability coverage can last for years, while short-term disability coverage lasts weeks or months.

Long-term disability insurance policies cover periods from a couple of years to the rest of your life (the ideal policy covers you until age 67). Short-term disability insurance tends to cover between 30-120 days.

5 - Long-term disability insurance is the coverage you should worry about

One out of every four workers will face a long-term disability at some point in their careers. Imagine you're part of that unlucky 25 percent and that you have no disability insurance. If the disability lasts 3 months, you may be still able to struggle through it with the help of employer benefits, cash savings, and lines of credit.

Now imagine that the disability doesn't end at 3 months but instead lasts 2 1/2 years or more, which is the average length of a long-term disability. How do you make up for lost income every month for *30 months* in a row? With long-term disability insurance, that's how.**

**Some might say "With Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), that's how." But SSDI is much harder to get than most people realize, and it can take a year or more to be approved. It's an important part of your income replacement plan but it can't compete with long-term disability coverage.

Chris Walters writes for PolicyGenius, a digital insurance brokerage trying to make sense of insurance for consumers.



Living Independently For All

TECHNOLOGY FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

Digital Accelerator Ring



Enjoy driving with both hands! DARIOS has a solution for hand controls for paraplegic drivers. A digital accelerator ring and the main hand brake allows the driver to keep both hands on the wheel. These can be installed on most vehicles with automatic transmissions. The original pedals remain functional. It is installed on the car's original steering wheel and all airbags, adjustments (tilt and telescopic), the horn, the cruise control remain functional. At low speed the acceleration is smooth and progressive. At high speed it is quick and dynamic. Only very little effort is needed to accelerate. The distance from idle to full throttle is only about 3/4 inch.

There's even a version that enables the driver to choose between two driving styles: "Standard" or "Sport". And the main hand brake is well integrated. The lever is pushed downward to brake. The force required to brake is less than half the force required by foot. You can even take a "test" drive by the videos on their website!

Available from kempf-usa.com

THE DOOR BEACON



Door bells can be hooked up to lights to let you know when someone arrives. But what about if you don't have a doorbell? The Door Beacon reacts to the vibration created when knocking on the door and the sensor causes it to flash. It has an adjustable sensitivity switch, just in case pets set it off unnecessarily. With three different mounting options, it's great for home or travel. Even if you are just in a noisy environment at work. Wireless installation as it uses a 9V battery.

About \$30 available from

MaxiAids.com

LINKS WORTH SHARING

Skills for Amputees –by James Pickard



How to tie shoes one-handed using the “Ian Knot: There are various methods of tying shoelaces with one hand. This video features a technique of pulling two loops through each other. While the one handed variation is not as fast as the two handed know, it’s hopefully easier than other solutions. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=si-iQpBBusM>



Think you can’t cook as an amputee? Try this video from Rosanna Radding on one-handed food prep that covers chopping, cutting, slicing, de-ribbing and more. It features the CanDo Cutting Board that shows a modification you could make to your cutting board. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xIa4Clgj30Q>



Whether you are an amputee, or lost the use of one hand through a stroke or some other mishap, washing dishes with one hand can be a challenge. Going beyond putting non-skid mats in the sink, this video shows you easy adaptations that make the job easier! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8aFScwLub1o>



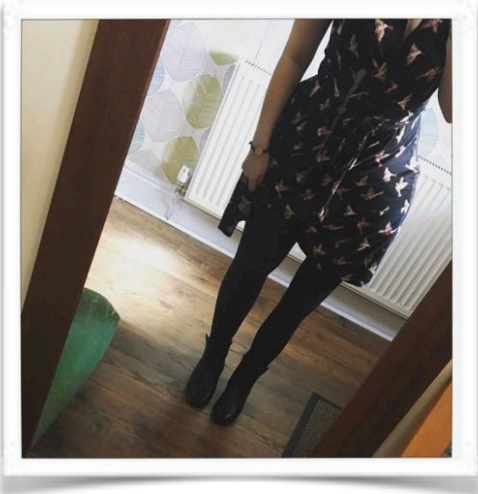
A simple job such as sweeping can be difficult even if you are just momentarily one handed. This video demonstrates clearly how to sweep an entire room quickly using just one arm. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kwtAZFaqm4>



Sometimes peeling hard boiled eggs are hard for anyone! But here is how to do it easily with just one hand. You don’t actually peel it, the key is to roll it out of the shell. And after boiling run them under cold water, as that can help. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mVQhH9my8oQ>

THE PROCESS OF GETTING A NEWLEG!

Blog by Exceptional Parent



Today I thought I'd write for you about something I get asked about a lot; what happens when I need a new prosthetic leg.

An appointment day starts by getting in to a patient transport ambulance provided by my local council for disabled people to get to and from hospital appointments with ease.. as someone who is currently unable to drive, these services are amazing and I'm so grateful they exist!

These vehicles usually look like ambulances but are white – and are never used for emergencies like regular ambulances. The vehicles are also fully adapted so that I can be wheeled on to the transport in my wheelchair comfortably without any hassle at all, and for people who have only recently been through surgery, there is room for a stretcher too.

Once I get to my rehabilitation centre, I check in at reception (I've been going there for 20 years.. they all know me so well!) and then take a seat and wait for my prosthetist to call my name when she is ready.

The first appointment for a new prosthetic leg is called a casting.. I will be measured and then a cast (the type you have when you break a bone) is then applied to my stump and I wait for it to dry/harden.

The purpose of the cast is to make a replica of my stump so that a comfortable prosthetic socket can be made! Once the cast has dried, it's removed and then we double check measurements to make sure everything is correct; once this is done, that's my casting appointment complete.

The second stage of getting a new prosthesis is usually called a fitting. I will have a socket and a roughly (not

perfect yet) complete prosthetic leg to try on.. I usually have to practice walking in between rails wearing this, and I will be giving pointers to my prosthetist like: "This feels a bit sore, here" or "The prosthetic leg feels too tall/small/uncomfortable" or "The way I walk is hurting"

This way, she marks the areas that I complain about with a marker and then leaves to go back into the workshop to work on my leg and fix the parts that aren't fitting correctly. This is an ongoing process until I don't have anything else that feels uncomfortable. Sometimes it takes a long time and we have to schedule another appointment to continue work on the leg.

It can be quite frustrating for me as I never really know if the new prosthetic leg is really uncomfortable or if it's just a case of getting used to it! It's much like a pair of brand new shoes.. you have to wear it over and over sometimes to see if it's ok.

After the fitting appointment(s) are complete, it will finally be time to go and collect my new leg! I collect it from the hospital and they are always making sure I'm 100% happy before sending me home – they have to make sure the leg is comfortable and safe before I leave.

It will take me a long time to get used to the new leg even if it's comfortable as I have to practice walking with it first with crutches and then using my wheelchair when walking feels too much. It's very important to make sure I only wear the prosthetic leg indoors at first as this is safest option to prevent falls outside or alone. This process will usually take me a long time to get used to the new leg even if it's comfortable as I have to practice walking with it first with crutches and then using my wheelchair when walking feels too much. It's very important to make sure I only wear the prosthetic leg indoors at first as this is safest option to prevent falls outside or alone.

This process will take about 2-3 months, and finally the leg feels "right". Then I can ditch my crutches and walk freely with my prosthetic. I can even donate my old prosthetics to countries that are less fortunate!

Microsoft's speech recognition system is now as good as a human



Microsoft's speech recognition has finally reached an error rate of only 5%, making it as accurate as the human ear. For over 20 years, testing has been done for checking the accuracy of transcribing recorded telephone conversations, both by humans and by machine.

By increasing the vocabulary from 30,000 to 165,000 words and making improvements on the acoustic language models they have reached this milestone.

There is still much work to do, since this breakthrough doesn't cover more complex tasks, such as recognizing speech in loud environments or deciphering strong accents.

TIDBITS!

Categorically left over but no less important

Quotes to make you think!

"Inequality is exclusion. Exclusion is disabling, not the disability itself!" ~ Tiffany Yu



Durable Medical Goods Exchange

Please call an office near you to make donations of durable medical items you no longer use or see if there is something you may need! Explain your needs and our trained staff may know the perfect item that will help you!

James Pickard in Moscow 208-883-0523

Valerie Johnson in Idaho Falls 208-529-8610

Todd Wilder in Boise 208-336-3335

CONTACT YOUR LOCAL IDAHO CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING



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www.idlife.org



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