



# **My Internship with Neurodiversity at Work**

Kennedy Krieger Institute



PRESENTER: AMINA ABUBAKER-SHARIF

# A short introduction about me

- Currently, I am an undergraduate senior at the University of Maryland Baltimore County.
  - I am studying Public Health Administration centered on Population Health.
  - A job that is an aspiration of mine is to be a Healthcare Organizational Leader or to work in Health Administration coordinating policies and services.
- Fun facts:
- In Ethiopia, there is 86 different languages that are spoken. I can speak 2!
  - I have traveled to 12 different states in the US and went out of the country to visit Ethiopia and Canada.



# Responsibilities at Neurodiversity at work

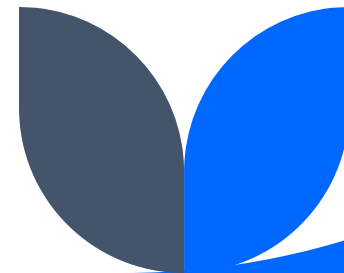
- I am primarily a support staff for the community members in CORE Foundations & interns at Project SEARCH.
- My support is both in-person and virtual. During in-person services, I support community members on Kennedy Krieger campus with employment services. During virtual sessions, I lead the Meaningful Community Services lunch session, create daily professional development lesson, and submit Apricot notes for community members.
- During employment services, I help to support John, Ted, and Edward in their jobs on campus. The assistance I provide each community member varies depending on their needs.
- I help to ensure that community members are focused and completing work tasks successfully.

# Candidate Interviews

- **Sarah Welch**- She is an occupational therapist at Kennedy Krieger for 10 years. In her free time, she enjoys being outside and hiking. A fun fact is she grew up in the Boston but managed to escape without a Boston accent.
- **Stephanie Skeen**- Program coordinator at Kennedy Krieger for Project SEARCH. She has been with Kennedy Krieger close to 4 years now. Steph enjoys training her dogs and other owners' dogs in her free time. A fun fact is she used to own a pet hedgehog whose name was Lucille.
- **Darren Frisinger**- Father to Will Frisinger (CORE Foundations community member), his occupation is a licensed therapist. A fun fact is he grew up in south central Virginia and is the only college graduate in his family.
- **John Perry** - A community member with CORE Foundations. He attended Kennedy Krieger High School before being an intern with Project SEARCH. He works in the Facilities department at Kennedy Krieger. A fun fact about John is that he knows how to make toy cars from scratch out of cardboard boxes. He has made a couple for the patients he has met at Kennedy Krieger.
- **Ted Goldsborough**- A community member with CORE Foundations. He works in Nook Café at Kennedy Krieger. A fun fact about Ted is that he is a descendant of Scottish and Spanish royalties. He also enjoys creative writing in his free time.

# Common Themes from Interview

- Kennedy Krieger Institute is very extensive and takes a patient-centered approach to care for individuals with disabilities.
- Kennedy Krieger staff members value communication. There is clear communication between patient families and care providers.
- The workplace culture at Kennedy Krieger has a teamwork focus. This allows individuals to be able to grow professionally.



# Neurodiversity at Work Themes

- Neurodiversity at Work has created an environment that is inclusive and advocating for every individuals needs.
- The team promotes an engaging and dedicated environment that shows through the consistent support from the staff members.
- Neurodiversity at Work staff provide constructive feedback and create comfortability for new staff to ask questions. This supports professional and personal growth.



# What I have learned from Neurodiversity at Work

- The Neurodiversity at Work department is vital to enhancing workplace and life skills for individuals with disabilities.
- Through programs like Project SEARCH, we are able to plant seeds of empowerment, confidence, and independence in individuals with disabilities. This growth will help Project SEARCH interns in future employment opportunities.
- Each individual's diverse range of interests, values and potential that has been highlighted by the Project SEARCH & Neurodiversity at Work community.

# Letter to Future Intern

Hello, Future Intern!

Congratulations on being accepted for this internship! This is an exceptional opportunity that will expose you to a wide range of experiences and topics. The people you meet here will leave a lasting impression on you, and you'll build valuable connections that will stay with you long after the internship ends.

The hard work you put into your projects and tasks will be worth it, so don't doubt your ability to complete them. If you ever feel overwhelmed, remember that the staff members are there to support you, and don't hesitate to ask them for help. Balancing your college courses and internship work may be a challenge, but effective communication with your preceptor and staff can make it much smoother. Keeping a calendar and notebook will help you stay organized and on top of deadlines.

If you have the opportunity to work on-site, I highly recommend it. Working in person will give you a more immersive experience, and you'll have the chance to build stronger connections with your colleagues and the community.

Remember that making mistakes is part of the learning process. Don't be afraid to make mistakes, as they'll help you grow and develop professionally. You've come this far, so have confidence in yourself and your abilities. Embrace this internship with enthusiasm and excitement, as it's sure to be an unforgettable experience with a supportive staff and team members.

You will do great with this experience!

Amina Abubaker-Sharif

