

The Implications of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 for Psychologists

Guest Editor's Overview of the following articles by Susanne M. Bruyère:

Nester, Mary Anne, *Psychometric Testing and Reasonable Accommodation for Persons with Disabilities*

Sachs, Paul R. and Redd, Cathy A., *The Americans with Disabilities Act and Individuals with Neurological Impairments*

Bell, Christopher G., *The Americans with Disabilities Act and Injured Workers: Implications for Rehabilitation Professionals and the Worker's Compensation System*

Pape, Deborah A., and Tarvydas, Villa M., *Responsible and Responsive Rehabilitation Consultation on the ADA: The Importance of Training for Psychologists*

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 provides civil rights protection to individuals with disabilities similar to that provided to other individuals on the basis of race, sex, national origin, and religion. It guarantees equal opportunities for individuals with disabilities in the areas of: employment, state and local government services, public transportation, privately operated transportation available to the public, places of public accommodation, and telephone services offered to the general public. The provisions of the ADA have relevance to psychologists in terms of their practice, research, and training. As mentioned by Robert Pollard in the preface of this special issue, this is one of two companion special issues on the ADA which are being published simultaneously by *Rehabilitation Psychology* and *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*. In these issues, the significance of the ADA to psychologists in such areas as assessment, reasonable accommodation considerations with special populations, new consulting opportunities, and training are discussed.

Psychologists may be impacted by the ADA in their provision of psychometric testing in pre-employment screening. In this issue of *Rehabilitation Psychology* Mary Anne Nester, branch chief of professional and administrative examining for the US Office of Personnel Management, addresses the legal and psychometric issues related to non-discrimination in employment testing for persons who have disabilities. In a related article in the *Consulting Psychology Journal*, Richard Klimoski and Susan Palmer review the ADA's potential impact on the organization staffing process, particularly the recruitment and assessment of job applicants.

The ADA has implications for those psychologists working with special populations, regarding accommodations that may be requested as individuals seeking reintegration into the workplace. Paul Sachs and Cathy Redd address the implications for individuals with neurological impairments in *Rehabilitation Psychology*, with attention to

prevocational assessment, vocational reentry and workplace adjustment. In *Consulting Psychology Journal*, Paul Carling discusses reasonable accommodation issues for persons with psychiatric disabilities.

There are a number of areas relating to the American's with Disabilities Act which may provide new opportunities for expanded practice and consultation for psychologists. In *Rehabilitation Psychology*, Chris Bell, former director of the ADA Technical Assistance Unit of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and currently a consultant with Milt Wright and Associates, discusses the interplay between the worker's compensation system and the ADA, and its implications for rehabilitation professionals. The implications of the ADA for those providing services for individuals with alcohol and drug addictions are discussed in the article in the *Consulting Psychology Journal* by Nancy Jones, legislative attorney with the congressional research law division of the Library of Congress

The Americans with Disabilities Act has significant implications for the training of rehabilitation psychologists. As discussed by Pape and Tarvydas in this issue of *Rehabilitation Psychology*, it is the minority of psychologists that have any specialized training in the area of disability or reasonable accommodation. These authors discuss the types of services that will be needed to support implementation of the ADA and its implications for the professional scope of practice of psychologists. Functional hierarchies for training based on a model of consultative practices presented, including rehabilitation principles, knowledge, and functions, disability concepts, and specific knowledge about the Americans with Disabilities Act. Resources for psychologists for further reading in each of these areas is provided. A listing of resource organizations and other print materials on the Americans with Disabilities Act is included in the *Consulting Psychology Journal* special issue. Information about how one can order this companion issue on the *Consulting Psychology Journal* is included in this issue.

It is our hope that these special issues of *Rehabilitation Psychology* and *Consulting Psychology Journal* contribute to your professional practice and interest in development and enhancement of services to individuals with disabilities.