

Guidance for Integrating AI in Service for People with Disabilities

Produced by members of the Digital Skills Working Group at the European Platform for Rehabilitation (EPR)

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly involved in many aspects of living, learning, working and communicating. Persons with disabilities and professionals working in services and support observe that knowledge of and proficiency with AI tools is becoming important in daily activities. EPR members expect this trend to proceed further, and recommend service providers to be pro-active with regards to integrating AI in learning and working.

The following pointers were collected in working group discussions.

Leadership

Integrating AI in service design and implementation requires leadership across all work areas, a strategy where and how best to use the technology for improving services, and the participation of all staff including workers, managers and administration.

Policy on AI integration

Organisations benefit from establishing a policy for continuous adapting to digital transformation, also as a means to stay true to their mission of inclusion and empowerment of people with disabilities.

AI literacy in rehabilitation

The use of AI tools requires knowledge and practice. Different forms of digital training is offered to students/clients as part of the overall training and support for social and vocational rehabilitation.

Learning to use AI for any profession

Digital training is integrated in studies for a broad variety of professions (not just digital), and includes career-related skills such as drafting motivation letters and CVs with AI assistance.

Person-oriented learning

Everyone has their own ways of learning and adapting to new technologies. Learners ought to be allowed to learn and adapt in their own pace.

Continuous training for staff

Staff are generally expected to have basic digital skills, and additional training is provided on a continuous basis. Learning to use AI tools means, largely, keeping up with developments.

The role of AI for media

AI plays a crucial role in dealing with media. Media training and support for use of social media is important, but materials ought to be user-suitable and not complex or high level. A training goal should be to enable media users to take charge.

Knowledge protects from risks and threats

The more someone works on their digital skills, the less risks there are to be exploited online, as one has more knowledge about the digital world and digital threats.

Simple and accessible language

For integrating AI in learning, working and living, it is important to use a simple and accessible language even when explaining complex concepts.

Combatting discrimination and exclusion

There is a risk of discrimination and exclusion of persons with disabilities in the rapidly evolving digital world. One important task is Digital Inclusion, another is promoting the ethical use of AI.

Use technology carefully

Certain risks may emerge with the ways how humans use AI models e.g. some have guardrails in place to not give answers on certain topics, but people find workarounds.

Helpful for some. Harmful for others.

There are concerns about humans establishing an emotional bond with an algorithm and trying to get conversational needs covered by AI. It may work well for some and be harmful for others. Service workers should offer (human) orientation and assistance.

Information security

There are concerns about how personal information is collected, stored and processed in the dialogue with AI tools. Digital training includes raising awareness and giving orientation for cautious revealing of personal information.

Impact on the environment

There are concerns about the environmental impact of AI tools and public unawareness e.g. how much energy is used for each request to an AI model, and how this energy is being produced. Ethical use of AI includes awareness about the energy use and harm to the environment.



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