

Question:

What topics are important to teach students about special needs during their training?

Answer:

In the training context about special needs, the most important topic is knowledge. It is important to guide students step by step to understand the different needs that people can have. These needs can be medical, social, or religious. If there is no awareness, it is difficult to understand and respond to these needs.

For this reason, it is important to start with theoretical training. After that, students should also have practical experience in the field. In this way they can slowly learn how to manage different situations.

For example, one important topic is gluten-free food. Students need to learn how to use the right ingredients, how to recognize them, and how to avoid contamination.

All these things together are part of the training of a student. Usually it takes about two or three years of training. After this time, the student becomes more aware and can work better in this field, respecting people with special needs.

Interviewer: How did you approach creating the menu for the pilot event while taking special needs into account?

Interviewee: Okay, so, um, the pilot event involved the participation of many people and, um, some of these people have special needs—some related to medical profiles and others to cultural and traditional aspects, including religious considerations. So we start by creating a menu with a signature dish, something that can work well for the majority of people—one or two signature dishes. Then we choose a first course, because we are in Italy and in an Italian menu there is always a first course. If we manage to make it gluten-free, um, even better. Then we provide other options where, for example, there is no pork, and where, for instance, we might be able to replace lactose with lactose-free products.