Follow-up of 185 Individuals with ASD placed from 1995-2003

Employment Status of Individuals with Autism

- Unemployed
  - Jobs tend to be low status or end prematurely because of social competence issues. (Howlin, 1997)

- Underemployed
  - Working far below skill level. Yale graduate working as a research assistant testing computer code along with undergrad work-study students. (Romoser, 2000)
What Do We Need to Think About?

- The person
- The planning process
- The job
- Strategies for making the match

The Person: Vocational Challenges

- Verbal & nonverbal communication
  - Unable to initiate or sustain conversations; repetitive use of language, volume
- Social behavior
  - Proximity, turn-taking, inappropriate/unrelated comments
- Nonverbal behavior
  - Eye contact, facial expression, and awkward gestures

The Person: Vocational Challenges

- Cognitive difficulties--
  - Planning and organizing activities or tasks (executive function)
  - Cognitive delays
- Special interests of abnormal intensity or focus
- Adherence to routines or rituals
  - Resistance to change, environmental changes, schedule, personnel, or in routine
- Repetitive motor activities

The Person: Vocational Challenges

- Unusual responses to sensory experiences
  - Touch, smell, sounds, tastes and visual stimulation
- Emotional vulnerability
  - Easily stressed, low frustration, difficulty tolerating mistakes, unusual fear responses, behavioral outbursts
- Motor Coordination
  - Fine and gross motor problems; unusual gait, problems with spatial judgment, difficulty with handwriting

The Person: Vocational Assets

- Accuracy in visual perception, pattern recognition
- Good memory for auditory information
- Tolerance for repetitive activities and routine
- Use of special interests to support work activities

The Person: Vocational Assets

- Attention to detail
- Dedication to getting the job done
- Eagerness to learn
- Low absentism
- Commitment to the job
Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence
Hi Ho, Off to Work We Go

The Process: Who’s Involved?
- Individual
- Parent/guardian and other interested family/friends
- Transition Coordinator
- Teachers
- Psychologist/Guidance Counselor
- Autism Consultant
- Related Service Personnel (OT, SLP, AT)
- MRDD representative
- BVR representative
- Job developer
- Job coach
- Others, as appropriate

The Process: Person-Centered Planning
- Community presence
- Community participation
- Choice
- Respect
- Competence

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The Process: Promoting Self Determination
- Self awareness
- Self knowledge
- Self instruction skills
- Self evaluation and self reinforcement skills
- Self advocacy and leadership skills
- Choice making skills
- Decision making skills
- Problem solving skills
- Goal setting and attainment skills
- Establishing an internal locus of control

The Process: Successful Job Placements
- Assess Interests/strengths, setting, supervisory skills and attitudes, not just job requirements
- Provide Supports Visual, Sensory, Social, Organizational & Technology
- Be Creative in thinking about solutions and individual needs/strengths. Remember the spectrum of individuals with a wide range of abilities & needs.

The Process: Job Placement
- For any student with a disability:
  - Assessment/Career Match
  - Provide accommodations and ongoing supports
  - Skilled supervision

Individuals with autism:
- Expand from focus on skill requirements to consider match with interests/strengths, work environment, and supervisory skills and work attitudes
- Expand supports to include communication, social and coworker relationships, and organization of work tasks
- Target ability to quickly identify problems, intervene, and monitor; willingness to accommodate is critical

Physical Components of the Job Match
- Hours of employment
- Acceptable sensory environments
- Pay, benefits, vacations, holidays, etc.
- Acceptable activity levels
- Physical requirements of the job
- Quality control requirements
- Production requirements
Social Components of the Job Match

- Acceptable level of interaction
- Clear job expectations
- Navigation skills/requirements
- Grooming and hygiene requirements
- Communication skills relevant to environment
- Personal space compatibility
- Phone/vending/cafeteria
- Co-worker training and support

The Job: Making the Match

- Videotape site with locations of restrooms, lunchroom, introducing of supervisor and job tasks
- Provide walk through of site, meet supervisor
- Create visual or written work schedule
- Develop plan to reduce or eliminate sensory issues
- Identify safe place, safe person
- Plan activities for down time
- Identify and teach social rules of the workplace

Strategies for Making the Match

- Job Carving
  - Identifying tasks and subtasks to a given position and employing someone to perform them
- Job Restructuring
  - Modifying how a particular job is performed; splitting a job; changing the order of tasks; combining tasks
- Job Creation
  - Identifying an employer’s unmet needs in the form of task lists matched to an individual’s skills

Strategies for Success

Identify Training and Ongoing Support Needs:

- Are visual supports and schedules working?
- Do co-workers need help communicating with employee?
- Is there a regular schedule for follow up?
- Is there a plan for developing natural supports?
- Is there an after work job club for problem solving?

Strategies for Success: Job Specific Preparation

- Taking direction from the supervisor
  - Identify the optimal way for the individual to receive feedback
    - Verbal
    - Written
    - Demonstration
  - At the beginning or end of the day
  - In private office

The Interview

- Most highly ranked interview behaviors:
  - Enthusiasm
  - Communication skills
  - Self confidence
  - Well groomed
  - Politeness
  - Steady eye contact

* A. Krause, 2000
Non Interactive Aspects of the Interview Process

- Promptness
- Appropriate dress
- Come prepared
  - Copies of resume
  - Pen and paper
  - Knowledge of the company
  - Prepared questions to ask

Social Aspects of the Interview

- Establish and maintain eye contact
- Smile
- Shake hands
- Active listening
- Knowledge of when to talk
- Knowledge of when not to talk
- Knowledge of when to stop talking
- Topic maintenance

Preparing for the Interview Process

- Role play and rehearse
- Teach alternate or compensatory skills
- Consider alternate rationale for a typical behavior:
  - “I would shake your hand, but... I have a cold”
- Teach appropriate ways to disclose disability information

The Supported Interview

- Promptness
- Appearance/dress/hygiene
- Teach specific greeting skills
- Arrive prepared
  - Have resume
  - Have letters of recommendation
  - Have assistive technology prepared

The Social Context of Work: The Hidden Curriculum

- Work requires interaction—with supervisor(s) and with other co-workers to complete the job.
  - Taking direction or feedback from the supervisor
  - Accepting feedback from co-workers
  - Collaborating with co-workers as necessary

The Social Context of Work: The Hidden Curriculum

- Spontaneous interaction during downtimes
  - Lunch, breaks, celebrations
  - Passing in the hallway
  - Bathroom
Promoting Social Competence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priming</th>
<th>Self monitoring</th>
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<td>Power cards</td>
<td>Social autopsies</td>
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<td>--Elisa Gagnon</td>
<td>--Lavoie</td>
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<td>Role Playing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Narratives</td>
<td>Cartooning</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Guide for Direct Instruction for Social Skills

- Rationale: How and why
- Presentation: Active and multimodal
- Modeling: Show what to do
- Verification: Confirm learner understands the skill
- Evaluation: Does learner use skill in direct instruction
- Generalization: Can learner use the skill in context

> Myles and Southwick (1999)

Teaching a New Social Skill

- Direct Instruction
- Recognize the skill when they see it
- Use the skill in role playing
- Use the skill in context

Myths About Sexuality

- Persons with ASD and other developmental Disabilities:
  - Have little or no interest in sex
  - Are hypersexual
  - Are solely heterosexual

The Truth is. . .

- Persons with ASD are sexual beings
- Are likely to know less than their typical peers
- They will likely need sexuality education that considers their communication and social language deficits
Sexuality: Central Concepts

- Public vs. private behavior
- Appropriate touching
- Proper names of body parts
- Personal boundaries
- Masturbation
- Relationship building
- Abuse prevention
- Dating skills
- Personal responsibility

Private vs. Public

- Brushing one's hair
- Holding hands
- Touching genitalia
- Using mouthwash
- Flatulence
- Kissing your mother
- Kissing girl/boyfriend

Life and Love: Positive Strategies for Autistic Adults
Zosia Zaks

• Developing Talents: Careers for Individuals with Asperger Syndrome and High Functioning Autism
  – Temple Grandin

Other Resources

- Asperger Syndrome: Transition to College and Work, Dan Coulter
- Manners in the Real World: Basic Social Skills, Dan Coulter
- Comic Strip ConversationsTM, Carol Gray
- Power Cards: Using Special Interests to Motivate Children and Youth with Asperger Syndrome and Autism, Elisa Gagnon
- The Hidden Curriculum, Brenda Myles, Melissa Trautman, Ronda Schelvan