Employment Status of Individuals with ASD

• Only 6% of individuals with ASD have full-time
• Only 12% of individuals with AS/HFA have full-time employment
  – Despite an average IQ
  – 22% have IQs in the superior to very superior range
• Adults say that finding a job would improve their lives more than anything else

Barnard et al., 2001
What Do We Need to Think About?

• The person
• The process
• The job match
• Strategies

The Person

“If you’ve seen one person with ASD, you’ve seen one person with ASD”
— Stephen Shore

The Person: Vocational Assets

• Accuracy in visual perception, pattern recognition
• Good memory
• Tolerance for repetitive activities and routine
• Use of special interests to support work activities
• Average to above average IQ (22% superior to very superior IQ)

The Person: Vocational Challenges

• Verbal and 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 gestures

The Person: Vocational Assets

• Attention to detail
• Dedication to getting the job done
• Eagerness to learn
• Low absenteeism
• Commitment to the job
• High level of concentration for long periods of time
• Loyalty

The Person: Vocational Challenges

• Cognitive difficulties
  – Executive functioning, problem solving difficulties
• Special intensity of extreme focus
  – Proximity, turn-taking, inappropriate/unrelated comments
• Adherence to routines or rituals
The Person: Vocational Challenges

- Unusual responses to sensory experiences
  - Touch, smell, sounds, tastes and visual
- Emotional vulnerability
  - Easily stressed, low frustration tolerance, difficulty tolerating mistakes, unusual fear responses, behavioral outbursts

The Person: Vocational Challenges

- Motor skills
  - Fine and gross motor problems; unusual gait; problems with spatial judgment; difficulty with handwriting; repetitive motor activities

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

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

Collaborate
Expect transition team

Assess
Interests/strengths, setting, supervisory skills and attitude, not just job requirements

Provide Supports
Visual, sensory, social, organizational and technology

Be Creative
Be thinking about solutions and individual needs/strengths. Remember the spectrum of individuals with a wide range of abilities and needs.

The Job Match Is Key!

Job Match: Personal Work Style

• Likes and dislikes?
  – What are you good at doing?
  – What do you like to do?
  – Do you have any hobbies or special interests that could translate into a job?
  – What do you absolutely hate or refuse to do?

Zaks, 2006

Job Match: Personal Work Style

• Sensory Issues
  – What environmental or other conditions are intolerable?
  – What conditions do you prefer?
  – Do you have any sensory issues you need to prepare for in advance?

Zaks, 2006

Job Match: Personal Work Style

• Communication Style
  – Do you enjoy talking to other people?
  – Is conversing, formally and informally, easy or difficult for you?
  – Are questions easy to answer?

Zaks, 2006

Job Match: Personal Work Style

• Social Style
  – To what degree do you enjoy socializing?
  – Does socializing make you anxious?
  – Do you have trouble understanding other people?

Zaks, 2006
Job Match: Personal Work Style
• Project Style (cont)
  – Do you work better on your own, with a leader, or with a group?
  – Do you like concrete tasks or open-ended projects?
  – If you usually work alone but then collaborate with others on a special project, would the switch be a big problem?

Zaks, 2006

Job Match: Personal Work Style
• Project Style
  – Do you mind repetitive work?
  – Are you easily distracted?

Zaks, 2006

Job Match: Personal Work Style
• Action Level
  – Do you move slowly or quickly?
  – Do you need a lot of action and motion or do you prefer to be still?

Zaks, 2006

Job Match: Personal Work Style
• Personal Issues
  – Do you have any anxiety issues to consider?
  – Do you like to dress up?

Zaks, 2006

Job Match: Jobs That are Good for Workers with AS
• Apprenticing to an expert in an area of interest
• Research and fact-finding
• Merchandizing/inventory/loading and unloading
• Some types of factory work
• Solitary job

Zaks, 2006

Job Match: Jobs That are Good for Workers with AS
• Jobs with animals
• Self-employment

Zaks, 2006
Job Match: Jobs for Visual Thinkers

- Drafting
- Photography
- Animal trainer
- Graphic artist
- Jewelry maker
- Web designer
- Veterinary technician

--Temple Grandin

Job Match: Jobs for Non-Visual Thinkers

- Auto mechanic
- Machine maintenance
- Computer troubleshooter
- Theater lighting
- Control systems programmer
- Landscape designer

--Temple Grandin

Job Match: Bad Jobs for Individuals with AS

- Cashier
- Short order cook
- Waitress
- Casino dealer
- Taxi dispatcher

- Air traffic controller
- Futures trader
- Receptionist
- Airline ticket agent
- Oral dictation

Good workers do not necessarily make good managers!

Career Direction Formula

--Gail Hawkins

- Sample Interest List
- Brain Stretching Chart
- Job Viability Checklist

The world’s a better place due to Dr. Grandin’s unique contribution. Not to mention that being a cow is much better.

--Gail Hawkins
Sample Interest List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trains</th>
<th>Airports</th>
<th>Maps</th>
<th>Movies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trucks</td>
<td>Airplanes</td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>Computer Games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subways</td>
<td>Cars</td>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>Video Games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Streetcars</td>
<td>Motorcycles</td>
<td>Buses</td>
<td>Sitcoms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Brain Stretching Exercise

Airports
- Online ticket agent
- Baggage handler
- Security officer
- Office support
- Cleaner
- Flight attendant
- Ground traffic controller
- Online ticket agent
- Shuttle driver
- Ticket seller
- Courier
- Information Booth attendant

Develop a Job Viability Chart

- Education
- Special training
- Experience,
- Knowledge
- Judgment
- Oral Communication
- Speed
- Accuracy
- Gross Motor
- Fine Motor
- Social Interaction
- Written communication

Job Match: Physical Components

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

Job Match: Social Components

- 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

Strategies
Strategies for Making the Match

- **Job Carving**
  - Identifying tasks and subtasks for 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: Making It Work

- 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 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

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

» A. Krause, 2000
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

Employer Misconceptions

- Assumptions that people with disabilities cannot do the work
- Concerns about attendance and retention
- Assumptions about accommodations
- Confusion over the definition of disability
- Concerns about employee safety

The Social Context. Hidden Curriculum

- The set of unwritten rules that no one has been directly taught, but everyone knows. Violations of these rules can make an individual a social outcast.
- Phrase associated with hidden curriculum:
  - “I shouldn’t have to tell you but … ”
  - “Everyone knows that … ”
  - “It’s obvious … ”

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: The Hidden Curriculum

- What happens if you don’t know the urinal rules?
  – Peter Gerhardt

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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>– Koegels</td>
<td>– Elisa Gagnon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power cards</td>
<td>Social autopsies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– LaVoie</td>
<td>Video modeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Playing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Narratives</td>
<td>Cartooning</td>
</tr>
</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

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

Donna Owens, Amy Bixler, Brenda Smith
Myles
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

Hottest Industries

Banking
Construction
Education
Entertainment
Food Service
Telecommunications

Hottest Industries

Healthcare
Hospitality
Legal
Manufacturing
Retail
Information Technology

Employer Concerns

- Finding/keeping qualified employees
- Containing costs
- Meeting profit goals in downturns
- Encouraging appropriate work ethic
- Training employees
- Finding employees with “soft skills”
Resource

Life and Love: Positive Strategies for Autistic Adults
Zosia Zaks

Resource

• 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 Conversations™, 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

Other Resources

• How to Find Work That Works for People with Asperger Syndrome, Gail Hawkins
• Asperger Syndrome Employment Workbook, Roger N. Meyer
• Preparing for Life: The Complete Guide for Transitioning to Adulthood for those with Autism and Asperger’s Syndrome, Dr. Jed Baker