

Transition to Careers for Individuals with Autism

APSE Webinar
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1. Career Planning

Initial Interview Preparation

- The job developer uses the initial interview to explore interests with the individual and to learn more about the work strengths and career plan of the individual.

Interview Preparation (cont.)

- For individuals with autism, there are two major considerations when setting up the initial interview:
 - Communication style
 - Environment

Communication Style

- Receptive language skills
- Echolalia
- Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)
- Sign Language
- Augmentative Communication Devices
- Gestures

How to Aid Understanding

- Visual supports
- Social stories
- Talk less
- Give wait time (use silence)
- Keep it concrete and straightforward
- Do not use sarcasm or abstract phrases

Interview Environment Considerations

- Does the student have sensitivities to light, noise, smells, certain fabrics?
- How does the individual “typically” react to new environments?
- Does the person utilize schedules in other environments?

Interview Environment Considerations (cont.)

- How does the individual understand the passage of time?
- What environmental supports are used to help the student learn?

Modifying the Interview Environment

- Consider meeting the individual in a familiar place
- Use visuals
- Develop a mini-schedule for the flow of the interview

Modifying the Interview Environment (cont.)

- Insure clear beginnings and ends
- Attempt to block out environmental distracters
- Respect sensory sensitivities

The Portfolio

- Who does it?
- What is in it?
- When do you start?
- Where do you use it?
- Why do you need it?
- How to best utilize it?
- Transfer of information from Service Provider to Service Provider for a person with Autism is as critical as breathing.

One Volume or a Series?

- Format
 - Personalized
 - Binder or Presentation Portfolio
 - Be cautious of age appropriateness
- Content
 - Overall goal, live work and play. History of goals?
 - Favorite things... activities, interest areas, special events, people... to be involved in.

Content (con't)

- Things I haven't done yet but want to do
- My best qualities
 - what I think and others
- I know a lot about
- Things I don't like
- The most important people in my life.
- How I am involved in the community
- **Education**
 - I learn best when...
 - Supports/Strategies and Tools I use for learning and understanding
- **Communication Style and Supports**
 - social stories, pecs, assistive tech
- **Sensory Needs**
 - breaks, physical contact, sensitivities
- **Motor Skills**
 - visual motor, gross, fine
- **Special Talents**
- **Community Access**
 - transportation, library, voting, supports needed

Content (con't)

- **Advocacy Skills**
 - understanding rights, can tell people what I want...How?
- **Post Secondary Education**
 - Special Need Coordination
 - Letter of Support Needs
- **Assistive Technology**
 - communication devise, notetakers, facilitated communication, mobility equipment, untimed testing, etc.
- **Community Agencies/ Support Services**
 - with contacts and services provided
 - needed services
- **Obstacles or Fears in the Community**
- **Skill Sets Achievement and Support Needs**
 - self advocacy
 - managing finances
 - caring for personal needs
 - buying, preparing, consuming food
 - buying, caring for clothing
 - exhibiting responsible citizenship
 - achieving socially responsible behavior
 - seeking, securing and maintaining employment
 - exhibiting appropriate work habits and behaviors
 - making decisions
 - personal safety practices
 - planning for social outlets
 - demonstrate self-organization
 - recognize and respond to emergency situations

Content (con't)

- Letters of Recommendation
- Work Experience/Work Exposure History
- Current Employment
- General FACT sheet one/two pages
 - name, address, phone etc
 - guardianship
 - PA/SS number
 - General Medical info
 - Emergency Contacts
 - Statement on Communication
 - Transportation info
 - Support Service Info

2. Workplace Supports

- Work is not a stand alone activity
- Preparing for work is not done in one class room, through one course or through one job exposure
- Job satisfaction is essential to maintaining work...What are the factors in your job that satisfy you? What do you VALUE?

Possible Work Problems

- Understanding what is expected of them when the job is not specific enough, the tasks are not defined and varied, the employer's expectations are not clear or there is little routine to the job
- Recognizing the informal rules of the workplace which others can understand without being told

Possible Problems (cont.)

- Working as a team..cannot offer recognize humor, hints, ironies
- seeking help in appropriate ways...having difficulty assessing the best times and methods to use
- Recognizing that co-workers might find their behavior intrusive or odd
- coping with unexpected changes at work...their consequent anxiety may make them less competent and more demanding

Problems (cont.)

- Remembering info that has been communicated verbally
- Different sensory reactions from the norm...background noises, florescent lighting, open windows, vibrations.

Ways to Improve the Experience of Work

- Gradual intro into the work situation, with support
- Clear, specific job tasks--made clear to employer
- Written, diagrammatic or pictorial instructions
- A structured work pattern which enables the employee to complete one task before beginning another

Improving (cont.)

- Clear line of management and an informed supervisor, or mentor who can be available to give advice
- Checklists and timetables for work to be done
- Initial close supervision
- Explicit rules of behavior and advice about unwritten rules in the workplace
- Consistency from colleagues

Improving (cont.)

- Immediate, clear and open feedback about the standard of work done
- Guidelines for colleagues about how they can meet the individual needs in the workplace
- Contingency plans for dealing with unbearable stress, a place to go for refuge, and contact with someone who will give support

Getting a Match and an Action Plan

- List the environmental needs of the student
- List the job requisites of the job
- List the requisites of the workplace
- Find the level of the match
- Create the action plan

Minnesota Work Adjustment Theory

- Work skills matched with Job Requirements = Satisfactoriness
- Work Values matched with Job Reinforcers = Satisfaction
- Satisfaction + Satisfactoriness = Job Tenure

Relation to Autism

- Too often we focus on satisfactoriness
- We need to assess what a worker with autism values
- We cannot assume what an individual values
- From experience, job retention is significantly increased when a worker with autism's values are addressed and met on the job

How to Assess Work Values

- Direct Interview
- Hobbies & Free Time
- Ask family
- Observations of behavior
- O-Net

3. Social Communication In the Workplace

Self-Advocacy Skills

1. *Asking For Help*
2. *Saying "I don't Understand"*
3. *Requesting a break*

Social Interaction In The workplace

- Temple Grandin is an individual with autism who has her Ph.D. in Animal Science
- She defined the following Rule System to guide her social interactions and behaviors

Social Interaction

- This system is helpful to assist workers in understanding social rules in the class
- There are four categories in this system:

1. Really Bad Things

Defined as things that are considered extremely bad by a culture and are most time illegal

Examples:

- Stealing someone's work
- Hitting a peer

2. Courtesy Rules

These things are important because they make others around you at work feel comfortable

2. Courtesy Rules *(cont.)*

Examples:

- Cleaning up the lunch area after you finish lunch
- Letting a worker in a rush talk to the supervisor before you

3. Illegal *But Not Bad*

These things technically violate a law, but are not considered bad by the culture

3. Illegal *But Not Bad* (cont.)

Examples:

- Speeding when you are late for school
- “Stealing” a paper clip from the supervisor’s desk

4. Sins of the System

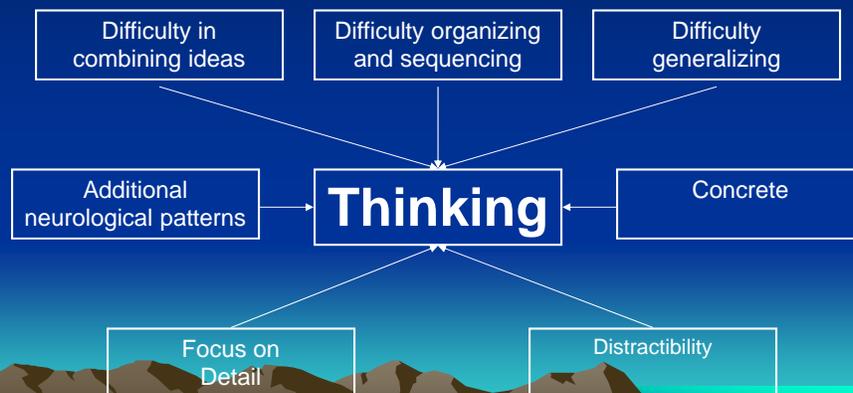
These are the unwritten rules of the workplace that will lead to disciplinary problems. Some of these rules may vary from class to class. This is a category that is difficult for workers with social communication disorders

4. Sins of the System (cont.)

Examples:

- Not asking a supervisor 6 times when it will be time to return from break
- Not discussing “locker room talk” in the workplace

The “Culture” of Social Communication Disorders: *Being a Cross-cultural Translator* (adapted from Mesibov)



Theory of Mind

- What if I don't know that you have mind separate and different from my own?
- What if I don't realize that you are a unique individual in your own right?

Theory of Mind *(cont.)*

- What if I don't realize that you have my interests at heart and want to offer me the benefits of your own experiences and thinking and ability?
- What if I don't know that you experience things differently from me?

Social Skill Supports

1. Visuals:

The purpose of Visual Tools is to enhance the social skill process by making the most of a person's ability to gain information from their sense of sight. As a result, some individuals are more likely to understand and interpret information.

Social Skill Supports

Types of workplace Visuals

- ◆ Maps
- ◆ Signs
- ◆ Calendars/Schedules
- ◆ Lists

Social Skill Supports

Using Visual Supports:

- ◆ Maps
- ◆ Signs

Social Skill Supports *(cont.)*

Using Visual Supports:

- ◆ Calendars/Schedules
- ◆ Lists

Make them user friendly!!!!

Social Skill Supports

2. Social Stories:

a tool you can use to teach social skills or situations (e.g., asking for help, maintaining self-control) as well as a number of social and behavioral concepts (e.g., fire drills, making transitions) to workers. They are especially useful for workers with cognitive disabilities or those who process information visually.

Social Skill Supports

Use Social Stories to Address:

- ◆ *Asking for help*
- ◆ *Being a team player*
- ◆ *Taking “breaks” rules*
- ◆ *Getting along with others*

Social Skill Supports *(cont.)*

Use **Social Stories** to Address:

- ◆ *Handling harassment*
- ◆ *Maintaining self-control*
- ◆ *Following directions*

Social Skill Supports

Good **social stories** use 3 types of sentences:

- ◆ Descriptive
- ◆ Perspective
- ◆ Directive

Social Skill Supports

3. **Comic Strip Conversation:**

A Comic Strip Conversation is a visual conversation between two or more people using simple illustrations in a comic strip format.

Social Skill Supports

- **Comic Strip Conversation:**

An individual uses simple drawings to communicate what he/she and others say, do, and think. These words and drawings serve as an outline of the conversation

Other Social Skill Support Strategies

4. Peer Mentoring:

- ◆ Formal vs. Informal
- ◆ Mentor Selection

Other Social Skill Support Strategies *(cont.)*

Peer Mentoring:

- ◆ Mentor Training
- ◆ Incentives & Follow-Up

Social Support Strategies *(cont.)*

5. Role Play:

- ◆ Specific text with instructor
- ◆ Specific text with peer
- ◆ Improvise entire interaction
- ◆ Practice in natural environment