



Thompson Center

For Autism & Neurodevelopmental Disorders

University of Missouri

Providing Meaningful Instruction to Support Employment: Students with Autism

Karen O'Connor PhD, BCBA, LBA

Jena K. Randolph, PhD

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Let's Talk About...

- Barriers to Successful Employment
- Strengths Based Approach
- Employment Goal Setting
- Obtaining Employment Experiences
- Instructional Strategies to Support
- Resources

Autism & Transition

- Individuals with autism have less successful outcomes in comparison to typical peers and those with other disabilities
 - Not utilizing strength-based employment
 - Often part time positions
 - 50-75% unemployed
 - Average to above average IQ not associated with better outcomes

Roux, et al., (2015) National Autism Indicators Report: Transition into Young Adulthood

National Autism Indicators Report
Transition into Young Adulthood
2015

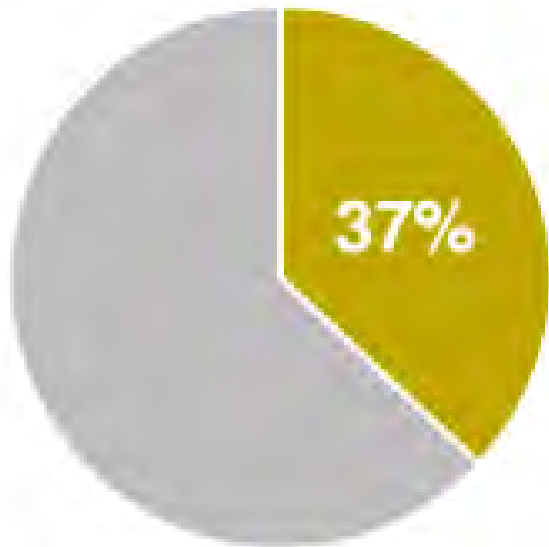
Autism & Transition

- Many do not achieve successful outcomes with transition services
 - In 2011, only 32% in Missouri using VR services (Burgess & Cimera)
 - Longitudinal study over 10 years found only 6% of participants had competitive jobs and 12% in supported employment (Taylor & Seltzer, 2011)
 - None worked full time

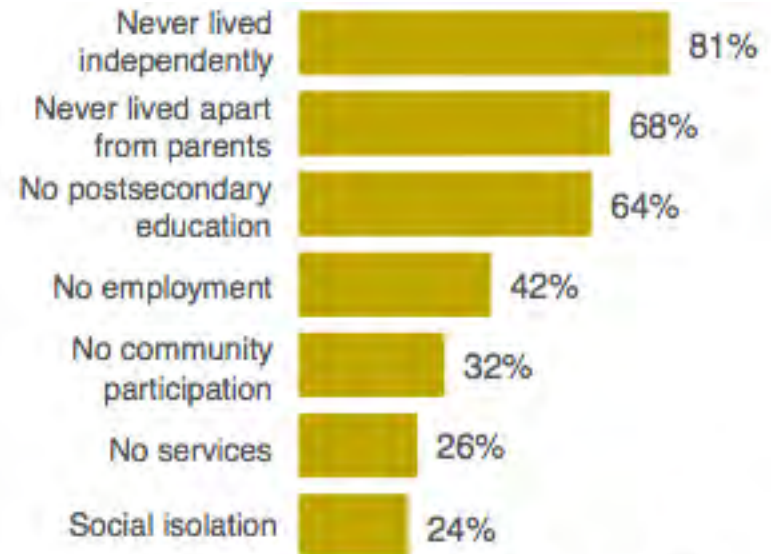
Why Employment?

- Our quality of life is often related to our:
 - Relationships
 - Independence
 - Community engagement

} Employment



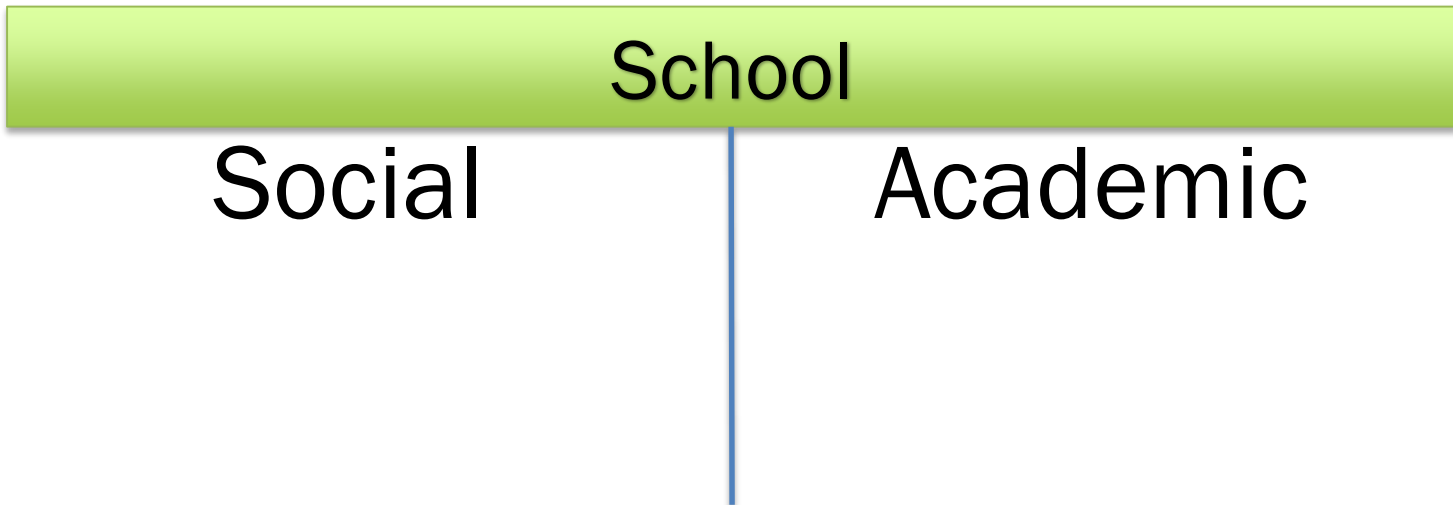
of young adults with autism were **disconnected** from both work and education after high school.



Percent experienced during their early 20s

What is the purpose of school?

To obtain skills to be independent,
have a career, be a member of society



Barriers

- Difficulty with job “match”
 - Lack of knowledge of strengths, preferences, how to identify jobs that fit desires and needs
- Lack of employment history
 - Limited resume, work skills, impacts “match”
- Employment soft skills
 - Social skills, executive functioning, workplace expectations
- Coordination between school, agencies and home
- Lack of student involvement

Strength Based Approach

Motivation- IS HUGE!

- Lack of motivation can be...
 - a barrier for those not involved in employment right out of high school
 - low based on history of failure
 - related to mismatch between desired field (or perceived desired field) and current status
 - Perceived as non-compliance
 - A huge reason why we need to start early, focus on strengths and teach goal setting

Areas to Assess

- Interests/preferences
 - Talk to them about preferences
 - Discuss strengths & jobs that could be a good fit
 - Exposure to variety of experiences with self and staff rating



Interest Inventory

What are some words that describe you?

What are some examples of things you like to do in and outside of school?
What types of supports do you need in order to participate or do the things you like?

Things I like to do	Supports needed

Identifying Ideal Environment

IMPORTANT JOB CRITERIA AND IDEAL WORK ENVIRONMENT

1. How many hours do you want to work per week?

2. What is your maximum commute (time and distance)?

3. How will you get to and from work? Drive my own automobile
 Get a ride from someone else Use public transportation Walk
4. How much money do you want/need to make? _____
 per hour per week per year
5. Are you willing/able to obtain further training to qualify for a particular job? Yes No
6. Do you prefer to: perform the same duties every day
 perform different duties every day perform a combination of new and routine duties

Considering Factors

Job/Career	Education Requirements	Interests	Environmental Factors	Salary Expectations

Independence, Social, Study... College Curriculum- Rigler, Rutherford, & Quinn
Missouri Connections – Tools to look up requirements and salary

Logging Experiences

Form 9.1 Preference Logs

Over the next seven days, keep track of at least three things you enjoy and one thing that you do not enjoy during your day. On days that you are working, focus your list on things that occur related to your work.

Day 1

What I liked	What I disliked
1.	1.
2.	
3.	

Identifying Strengths

- May struggle with accurately identifying strengths and challenges
 - Discuss strengths
 - Practice looking for areas of strength and identifying what environments work best for the individual
 - This can help with finding a good job match
- Directly related to addressing **self-determination**

Goal Setting for Employment

Autism & Transition



Only **58%** of youth with autism had a transition plan at the required age according to their teachers

(Roux, et al., 2015)

Autism & Transition

Only 4 out of 10 special education students have transition plans that **meet timelines** and **are measurable** (Landmark & Zhang, 2013)

1/3 of youth with autism indicated they wanted to be **more involved** in their transition planning (Cameto, et. al., 2004)

Goals that We Set

- Goals should be SMART and individualized to each student



Areas to Focus Goals

- Employment
- Post-secondary education or training
- Independence
- Community participation
- Transportation
- Executive functioning skills
- Self-determination
- Communication and social skills

Transition Goal Writing

Common Process

Long-term goal for the student:

Austin will work in a full time job that pays at least minimum wage. He will independently travel to and from work using the public bus system.

Priority Objective(s) for Current Semester:

- Austin will explore jobs
- Austin will identify what he likes
- Austin will learn to take the bus



Long-term goal for the student:

Category (circle one):

- Employment
- Post-secondary Education
- Independent Living
- Community Participation

Priority Objective(s) for Current Semester:

-
-
-

What skills/steps will let you know they are meeting these objectives:

Objective	Measures

Objectives to Meet this Goal:

-
-
-
-
-
-

Transition Services to Address Objectives

Objective	Service

Goal:

Objectives:

- 1.
- 2.

Data Collection Plan:

Teaching Student's To Goal Set



Goal Planning Form

Goals	Basic plans	Accomplish-ments	Roadblocks	Changes to action plan	New goal

Teaching Student's To Goal Set

My goals	Why?
Others' goals for me (What I think others want me to do)	Why?

Teaching Student's To Goal Set

Worksheet 7.5



WEEKLY GOALS AND ACTION ITEMS

For the week of: _____

Goal 1: _____

Specific steps I will take toward this goal:

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

Goal 2: _____

Specific steps I will take toward this goal:

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

Employment Experiences



In order to work,
you need to work.



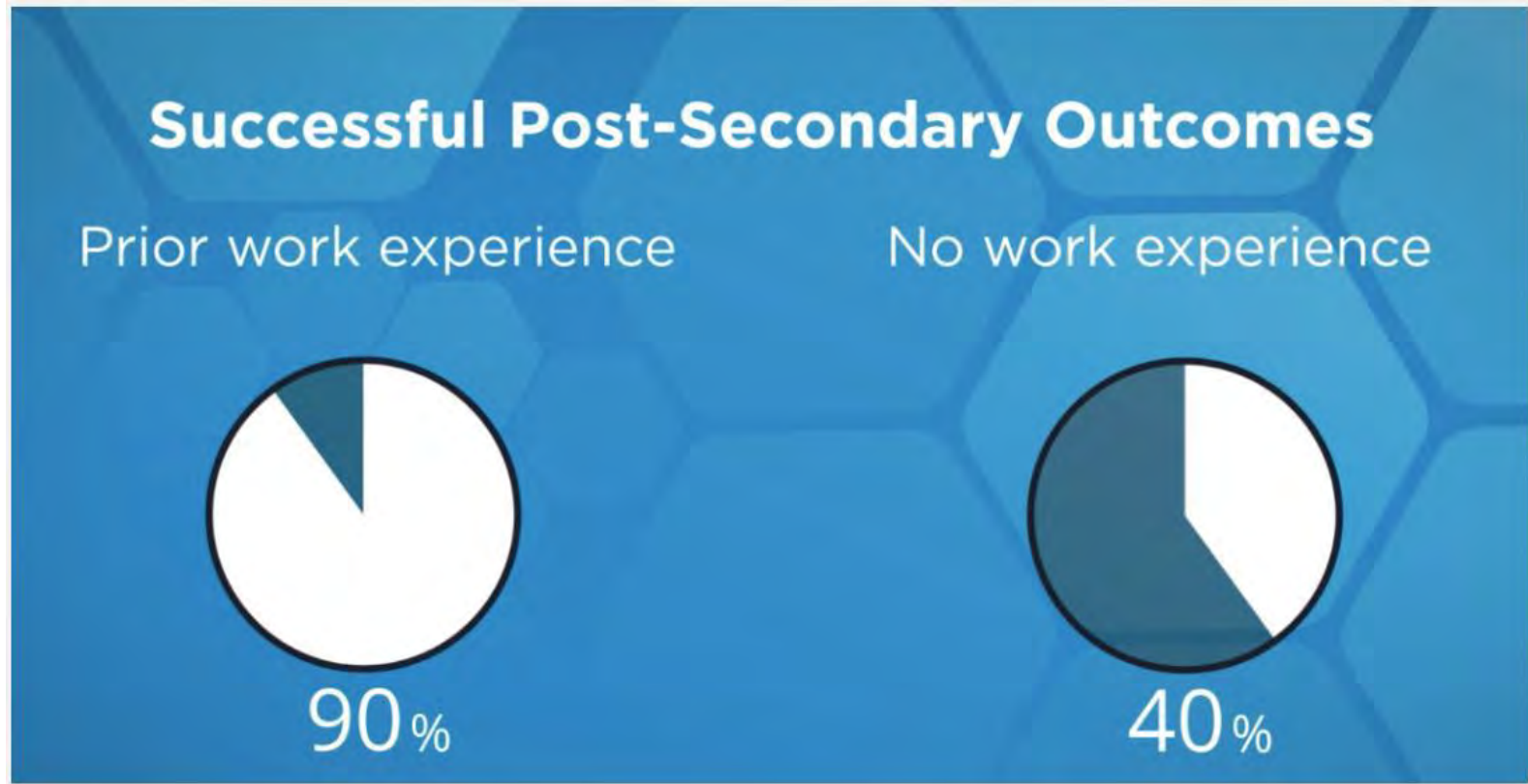
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Benefits of Early Experience

- Identify preferences and strengths
- Address barriers gradually instead of all at once
- Provide safe environments for missteps
- Provides performance feedback across multiple settings
 - Leads to generalization
- Establish importance of employment early
 - First jobs usually not ultimate, ideal career

Importance of Work Experience Prior to Graduation



Incorporating Work into School

- School jobs/responsibilities
- Community outings with functional goals
- Collaboration with parents for outside employment
- Arranging volunteer opportunities
- Work based instruction (interviews, applications, etc.)
- Competitive employment opportunities
- Career preparation with goal setting

Needs to be a priority within instruction regardless of work or college bound

Collaboration with Families

- Work with families to help provide employment experiences at home
- Help families connect what you are doing at school to community settings
- Support collaboration with agencies to connect these experiences- active role in facilitating this!
- Set the tone for a shared vision and responsibility across the transition years
- Collaborate with a focus on **independence**- how can school and home work together to promote student **independence**

Collaboration with Families

- Transition IEP meetings:
 - Focus needs to be on the student (strengths, desires, realistic plan)
 - The transition plan should guide the whole meeting
 - Include observable and measureable objectives to a shared vision for a long term goal
 - Should provide a guide on how to connect to the community
 - Facilitate relationship between family, school and outside agencies

Ideas for Families

- Home chores/responsibilities
- Community outings with functional goals
- Collaboration with school for additional job experiences
- Arranging volunteer opportunities
- Career preparation with goal setting
- Youth group opportunities
- Access neighbors and family friends
- Work experience should occur without parents present
- Competitive employment opportunities
- Work based practice/homework (interviews, applications, etc.)

**Needs to be considered in school-based planning
regardless of work or college bound**

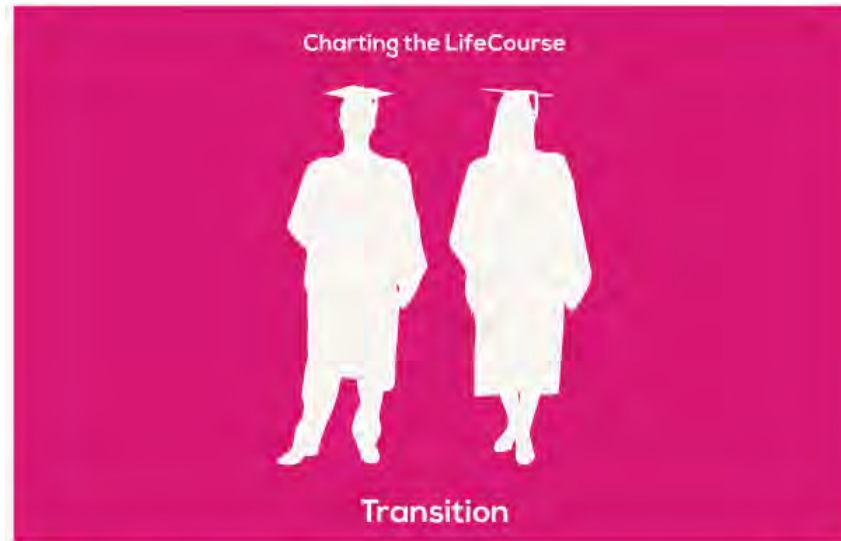
Transition Checklist

Transition Timeline and Checklist

Birth-Early Childhood

Domain	Transition Related Tasks	Responsible Party
	1. Expose to a variety of leisure and recreation activities (e.g. camps, sports, swimming, play dates)	
	2. Demonstrate participation in both individual and group leisure/recreational activities	
	3. Work cooperatively on a variety of household chores to model, encourage, and praise participation.	
	4. Have child maintain a piggy bank/wallet for money given/earned	
	5. Have child put toys and personal items away (provide consistent place for them to do so)	
	6. Expose to riding local public transportation systems.	
	7. Seek out opportunities to have same age peer play time (e.g. invite friends' children, neighborhood children, etc. over to play; seek out participation in local church youth room; research local recreation activities that bring young children together.	
	8. Have your child assist in opening containers, pouring drinks, setting and clearing the table	
	9. Provide opportunities to make choices/ decisions	
	10. Participate in the community (e.g. go to restaurants, movies, library, etc.)	
	11. Expose to computer, phone, and other technology in environment (e.g. to hear loved one's voice on phone, to play a computer game that teaches mouse skills, to pretend type, etc.)	
	12. Clearly define family rules (with rewards and consequences)	
	13. Support child to answer his/her own questions to doctors/care providers	

Charting the Life Course



LIFE DOMAIN  **LIFE STAGE** 

Your child is entering a point in time, filled with change, growth, excitement, and sometimes fear and confusion, called **TRANSITION**. Transition is defined as movement, passage, or change from one position, state, stage, subject, concept, to another. For you and your child, transition means that he/she is moving from childhood to young adulthood, and from school to adult life. There are many things to think about and do to prepare for this change.

This guide is to help you think about some of the questions to ask, options to consider, and things to talk about with your transitioning youth. Choices and decisions you and your son/daughter make during this time can help to positively shape the future and the life they will live as an adult. This guide is based on *Charting the Life Course: Experiences & Questions*.

Charting the Life Course: Experiences & Questions presents questions to ask or consider in different life domains. Life domains are the different aspects and experiences of life that all people consider as they age and grow from childhood into adulthood and, eventually, the senior years of life.

The LifeCourse Framework was created to help individuals and families of all abilities and all ages

- develop a vision for a good life,
- think about what they need to know and do,
- identify how to find or develop supports,
- and discover what it takes to live the lives they want to live

Individuals and families may focus on their current situation and stage of life but may also find it helpful to look ahead to think about life experiences that will help move them toward an inclusive, productive life in the future.

Instructional Strategies to Incorporate

Direct Social Instruction

Expected v. Unexpected

- Respectful language to directly address social skills
- Relate to student's perspective:
 - what they expect in situations
 - how they react when something unexpected happens
- Addresses the “why” behind hidden social expectations

Direct Social Instruction

- Expected v. unexpected

Expected Behavior	Unexpected Behavior
Let your coworker know you want to talk to him in the morning about an idea for the project.	Tell your coworker you want to meet with him right then about an idea you are considering.
Ask your coworker if he has any evening plans (simply to show you are interested in him).	Tell your coworker at length what your after-work plans are but fail to ask about his plans.
Tell your coworker to have a good evening.	Don't acknowledge your coworker at all as he leaves the office; just watch him leave.

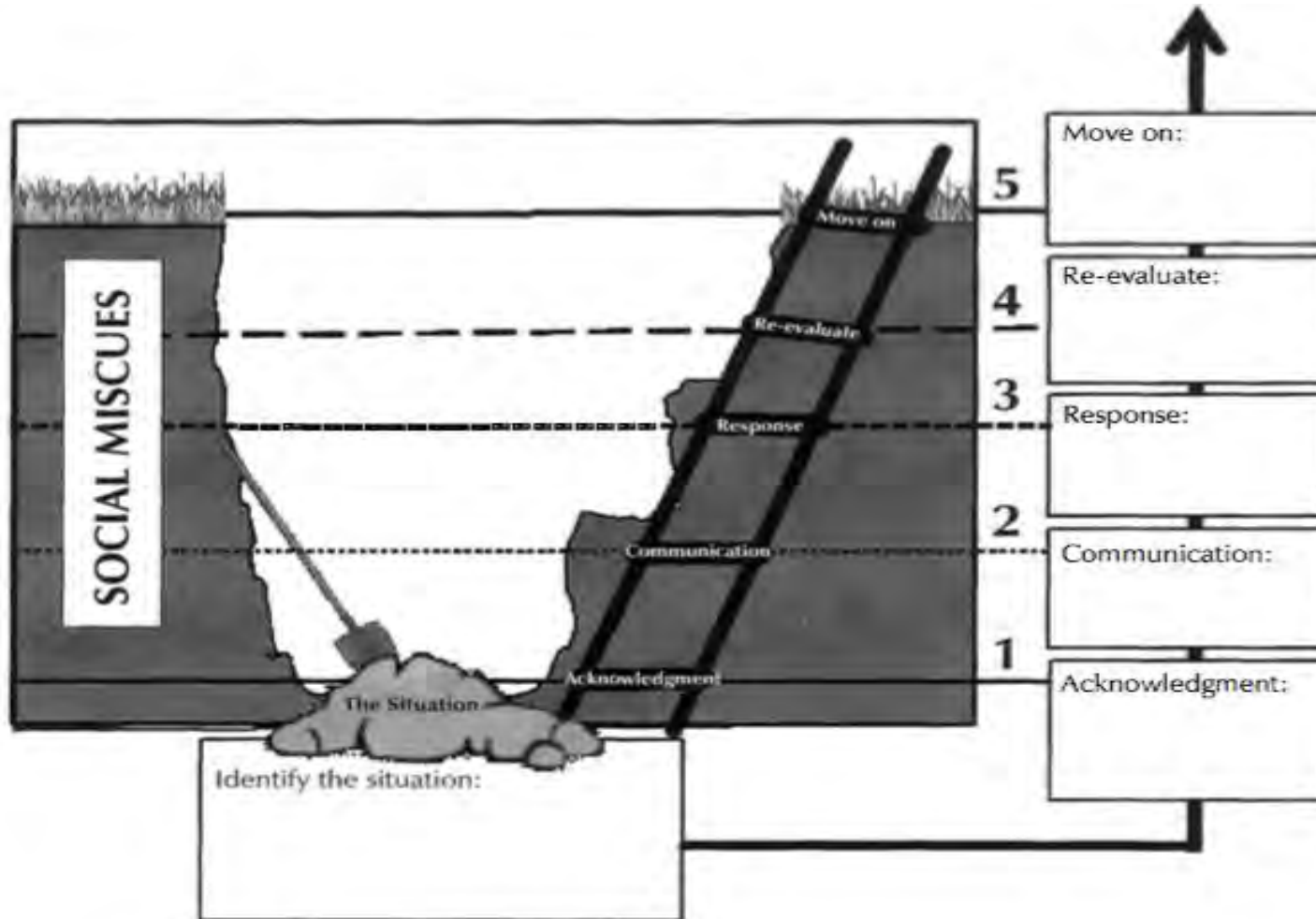
Direct Social Instruction

- Expected v. unexpected

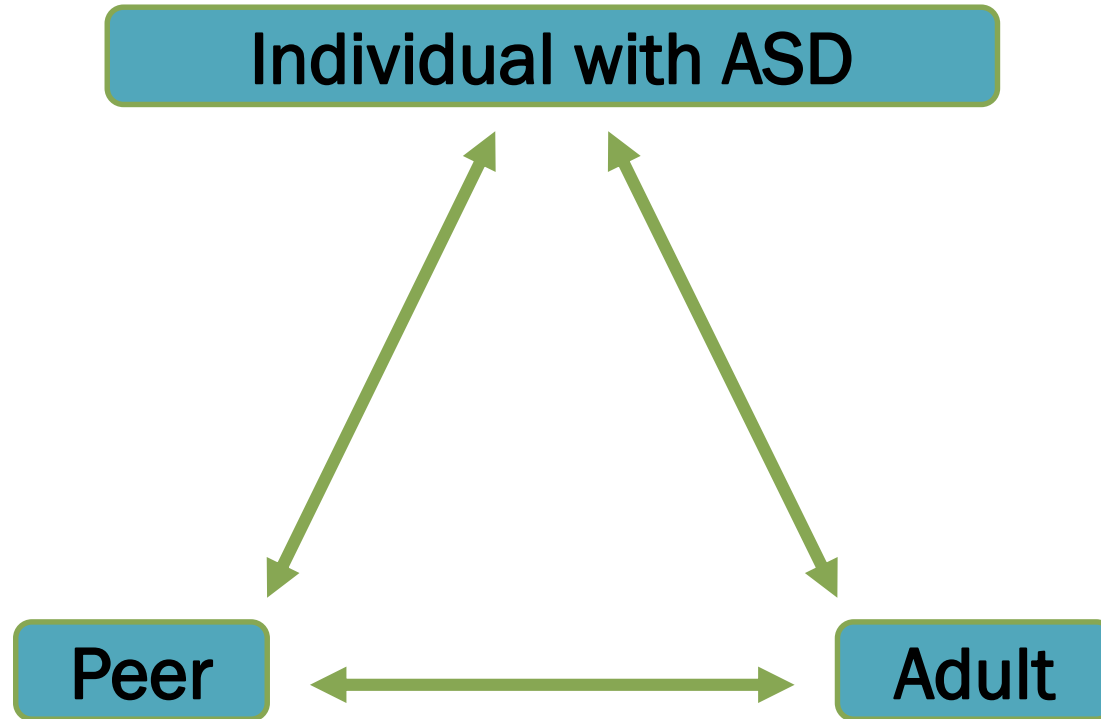
Okay to Say at Work	Safe to Say with Non-Work Friends and Family	Notes
Great football game Sunday!		Part of greeting or topic at break or lunch
	I liked the special music at my church last Sunday.	The topic of religion is best not discussed at work
I was so sick yesterday.	I threw up six times yesterday.	Employers/co-workers do not need the details of your illness. Friends and family may not want a lot of detail – but is not prohibited.

Direct Social Instruction

- Teaching a process with concrete steps and visuals

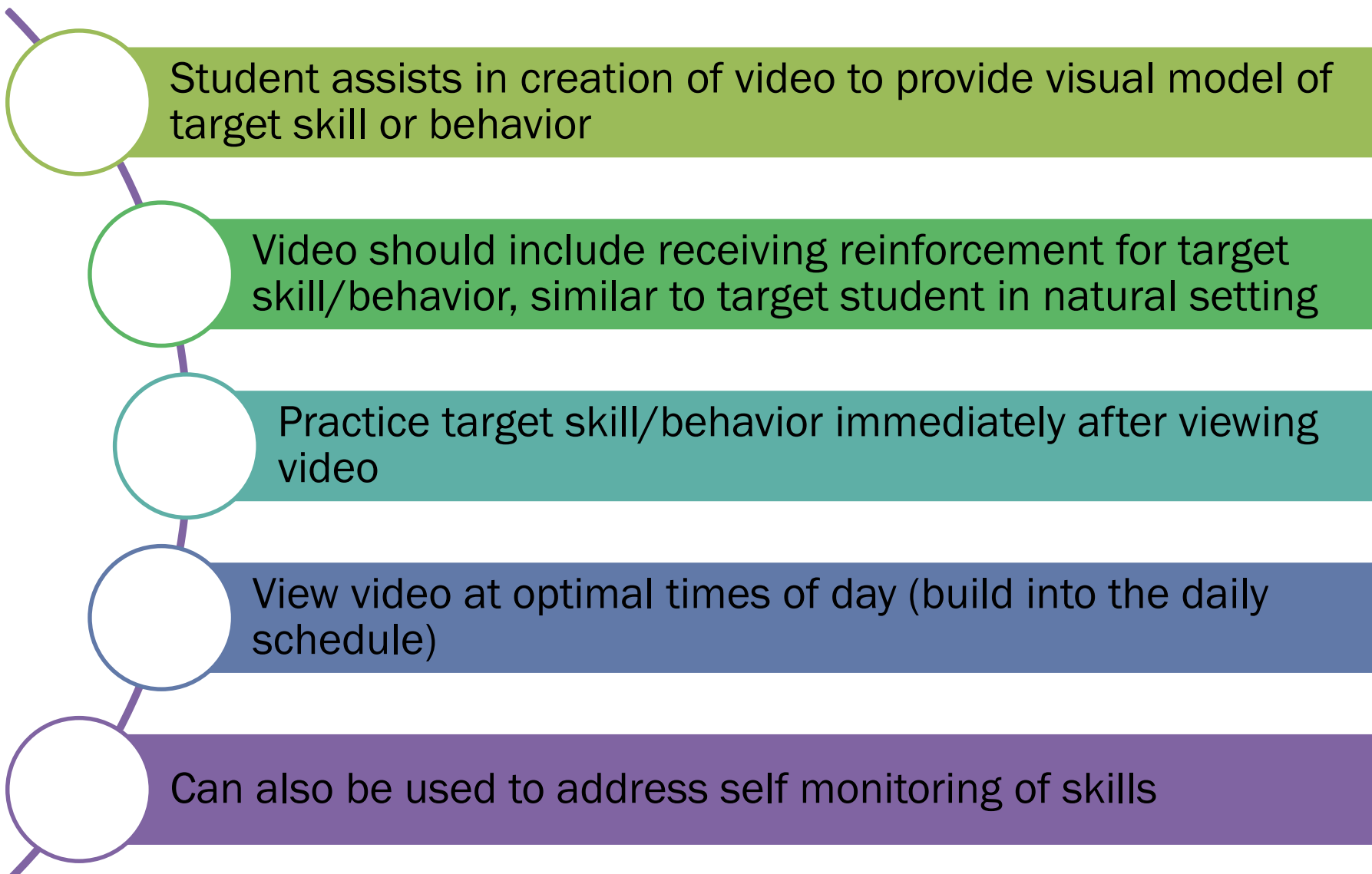


Peer Mediated Instruction



Utilizing peers increases the frequency and quality of social learning opportunities in the natural environment

Video Modeling



Student assists in creation of video to provide visual model of target skill or behavior

Video should include receiving reinforcement for target skill/behavior, similar to target student in natural setting

Practice target skill/behavior immediately after viewing video

View video at optimal times of day (build into the daily schedule)

Can also be used to address self monitoring of skills

Self-Monitoring

- Gain insight into their use of skills throughout a variety of situations (or accomplishing goals)
- At the end of an activity/day, individual can fill out a self-reflection sheet
 - What went well (incorporate successes), improvements for next time, how behavior impacts others (how they may have helped/hindered the group activities)
- Initially large focus on accuracy checks with the instructor (not punitive)
 - Reinforce honesty and progress
- Fade support over time, goal to be an internal process

Self-Monitoring Example

How did I do?	Great! Most of the time!	Pretty good- but needed reminders	Okay- but I needed a lot of help	Not at all- having a rough day
Accepting mistakes and staying calm				
Listening and responding to classmate's ideas				
Continuing to try if something was hard				

STRIVE

Self-Determined Transition Readiness through Individual Vocational Experiences

STRIVE is a post-secondary education program offering two semesters of non-credit employment skills development at the University of Missouri.

- STRIVE prepares individuals for employment with it's 3 guiding pillars:
 - Direct Skill Instruction
 - Job experience and coached feedback
 - Peer mentoring
- Eligibility
 - Medical and/or Educational autism diagnosis
 - Ages 18-25 (not enrolled in high school)
 - Have comprehensive (verbal & non-verbal) IQ at or above 85
 - Have a strong desire to work competitively

<https://thompsoncenter.missouri.edu/STRIVE>

Resources

- BASICS College Curriculum (4 books; Rigler, Rutherford & Quinn, 2014-2016)
- Helping Adults with Asperger's Syndrome Get and Stay Hired (Bissonnette, 2015)
- Hidden Curriculum of Getting and Keeping a Job: Navigating the Social Landscape of Employment (Myles, Endow, & Mayfield, 2013)
- Missouri Connections- <https://mocis.intocareers.org/>
- Social Thinking at Work: Why Should I Care (Winner & Crooke, 2011)
- Self-Determination: Instructional and Assessment Strategies (Wehmeyer & Field, 2007)
- Universal Design for Transition: A Roadmap for Planning and Instruction (Thoma, Bartholomew, & Scott, 2009)

Resources

Autism Speaks Transition Tool Kit

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/family-services/tool-kits/transition-tool-kit>

OCAI Autism Internet Modules

<http://www.autisminternetmodules.org/>

National Professional Development Center on ASD- Evidence Based Briefs and Modules

<http://afirm.fpg.unc.edu/>

<http://autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/>

Missouri Autism Guidelines Initiative (MAGI)

<http://autismguidelines.dmh.mo.gov/>



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SPARK – Simons Foundation Powering Autism Research for Knowledge

- SPARK is an online research partnership with the mission of speeding up research and advancing the understanding of autism.
- Eligibility: Individuals with a professional diagnosis of autism.
- Participation can be done entirely at home – registration is completed online.
- Benefits:
 - Gift card
 - Significant genetic results returned
 - Future autism research opportunities
 - Access to resources
- For more information visit: <https://thompsoncenter.missouri.edu/>



Mizzou Online!

Master's Degree in Autism



Contact Information

Program details:

Department of Special Education
573-882-3742 SpEd@missouri.edu

Jena Randolph, Autism Education Program Coordinator
573-884-1911 RandolphJ@health.missouri.edu

Course enrollment information:

Mizzou Online
1-800-609-3727 MizzouOnline@missouri.edu

online.missouri.edu/AutismEd



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Thank you!
Any Questions?

Obtain Handouts Here:

<http://tinyurl.com/EmployASD>

Karen O'Connor
oconnorkv@health.missouri.edu