The Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities
New Jersey’s University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service

Developmental Disabilities Lecture Series

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Transition to Adult Life and Employment for Youth and Young Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders

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Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
Liberty Plaza, 335 George Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901
Participants will:

1) Identify the essential skills necessary for youth with ASD to successfully transition from school to independence and employment

2) Discuss and identify instructional methods to teach youth with ASD these skills

3) Create sample plan to teach these skills to youth with ASD for self-selected case studies presented during the session

Learning Objectives

- Participants will:
  
  1) Identify the essential skills necessary for youth with ASD to successfully transition from school to independence and employment
  
  2) Discuss and identify instructional methods to teach youth with ASD these skills
  
  3) Create sample plan to teach these skills to youth with ASD for self-selected case studies presented during the session

What We Know about Autism Spectrum Disorders in Adolescence and Adulthood
A. Social Communication (must meet all 3 criteria)
- Social Reciprocity
- Nonverbal Communication
- Age Referenced Relationships

B. Restricted/Repetitive Behavior (must meet 2 of the 4 criteria)
- Repetitive Speech
- Repetitive Routines
- Restricted Interests
- Hypo/Hyper Reactive to Sensory Input

Secondary Characteristics
- ASD
- Mental Health Diagnoses
- Behavior Challenges

Transition Issues in ASD
- Unemployed and underemployed at higher levels than others with disabilities
- Low rates of independent living — Most individuals with ASD continue to live at home with their parents
- Low incidence of friendships and relationships

According to the NLTS 2...
- Had the second lowest “employed since high school” rate
- 68.8% worked in “traditional, low-wage, low-skilled jobs” such as office support, food preparation, and building and grounds maintenance.
- Had the lowest average hours worked per week, the lowest wage, and were among the lowest percentage receiving health insurance or retirement benefits.
- Had, by far, the highest percentage of workers in temporary jobs (45.5%)
- Had the third highest rate of being laid off or fired

According to the NLTS 2...
- 83% continued to live with their parents
- Only 48.2% (lowest rate among individuals with disabilities) reported seeing a friend outside of work or school.
- 68.2% of one sample attended sheltered workshops, day activity centers or had no structured day activities at all.
- 29.2% of this sample had no engagement in work, post secondary education or training or any other daytime activity after high school. This was the highest rate of non-engagement after high school among all people with disabilities.
What do we know about learning and ASD?
- Higher degree of intensity
- Much more exposure to learn
- Many, many, many trials to acquire skill
- High salience to stimuli
- General case instruction
- Fluency

What Happens in High School? (NLTS 2)
- Only 32.7% of youth with ASD report participating in their transition plan (lowest participation rate of any disability)
- Main transition goal is to acquire work in sheltered workshop
- 97% of youth with ASD attend public high school

What Happens in High School? (NLTS 2)
- 84% in “regular” high school
- 12% in special education center
- 4% charter, magnet, alternative, private, home or hospital school
- Majority of coursework in special education
- Highest number of high school credits of any disability group
- Highest GPA of any disability group (3.0)

High School Curriculum

Non–Academic/Non–Vocational

- Life Skills 13%
- Fine and Performing Arts 22%
- Physical Education 24%
- Learning Support 41%
What have we taught?

- Compliance over problem solving
- Skill specificity over generalization
- Repetition over fluency
- Dependence over self determination
- Non–academic/non–vocational over functional academic or vocational
- Learning support over life skills

ASD in Adolescence and Adulthood

- Generally compliant, as long as routine is honored
- Prompt dependent
- Poor problem solvers
- Difficulty with choice and decision making

Additional supports for individuals with ASD in the work place

- Behavioral Consultation with Behavior Analyst
- Consistent Structure to Seemingly Unstructured Internships
- Behaviorally Defining Idioms, Social Skills, and Work Expectations
- Visual Supports to Increase Implementation of Strategies
- Self Monitoring Checklists and Reinforcement Programs
- Role–Playing and Practice for Required Social Skills
- Ongoing Intensive Instruction and Monitoring of Student Success

Behavioral Consultation with Behavior Analyst

- Weekly Meetings
- Use a Positive Behavior Support model to develop interventions
- Provide “on–call” support as needed
  - Example: Paul had aggressive episode and Behavior support was available that same day
  - Meeting with parent to review incident and develop plan was completed within 24 hours

Behavior Occurs
- Staff Meet
- Review Events around behavior

Environment or Antecedent
- Factors that contribute
- Factors that mitigate
- Understand expectations?
- Can workers and Supervisor help?

Behavior
- Why was it a problem?
- Know what’s expected?
- Can perform it?
- Will visual supports help?

Consequence
- Get or avoid?
- Can provide desired outcome?
- Understand consequences?
- Can Others help?

Challenges of Positive Behavior Supports at Work

- Visible and public context
- Supports are co–workers and supervisor
- Pressure to perform
- Fewer trained staff
- Lack of access to PBS services
- Contextual fit
Lily’s Positive Behavior Support Plan

› Teach
  • Teach accepting correction

› Respond
  • Train co-workers and supervisor about Lily’s disability

Consistent Structure

› Internships are frequently not structured
› Ask for the tasks they complete everyday
› Create regular schedule
  • Example: Charles working in Materials Management
    • Completed Deliveries in the Morning
    • Completed Inventory Counts on “high use” floors in the afternoon

Idioms, Social Skills, and Work Expectations

› Individuals with ASD do not necessarily understand idioms or know what is expected of them at work or in social situations
  • Example: The High Road

Visual Supports

› Make everything you can VISUAL!

Self Monitoring

› Teach the person to monitor and collect data on their own behavior
Role Playing to Practice Social Skills

- Perfect practice makes for perfect performance
  - Example: Paul and Accepting corrections:

Elizabeth

- Strengths
  - Detail oriented
  - Hard working
  - Accurate
  - Fast paced

Challenges

- Noise level
- Hard time with changes in schedule or when things don’t play out as expected (transportation, work tasks)
- Appropriate use of hands when agitated
- Interactions with co-workers
- Unusual prosody

Supports

- Task Analysis in notes section IPOD
  - How to call job coach
  - New task for easy referral and access
  - Schedule for work day/ forewarning new schedule changes

- Alarms
  - Keep working
  - Remind when call job coach if transportation has not arrived

- Incredible 5 point scale for noise volume
  - Background of IPOD screen for subtle prompting

- Visual Cue Cards
  - “I’m feeling sleepy…”
  - “I’m feeling sad…”
  - “I’m feeling frustrated…”
Elizabeth's Internships to Employment
Internships:
- Employee Wellness
- Diabetes Treatment Center
- Foundation

Employment:
- Employee Wellness/ Diabetes Treatment Center
- Scanning in employee documents
- Putting together TB masks
- Assembling packets for employees
- Compiling database for physician referrals
- Library of Diabetes related research articles for employee use
- Assist in event preparation: invites, decoration, etc.

Job Details
- Work on teams with ability to be independent
- Cleaning IV pumps & poles, SCD, isolettes, and giraffes
- Rounding floors, maintaining records of equipment found and cleaned, steering a cart
- Thorough, detail oriented
- Lots of movement throughout hospital

Hypotheses
- **When** Charles feels he is late to work, he will make faces, stomp, and sob in order to communicate that he is frustrated and obtain attention from someone who can help him get on track for a good work day.
- **When** Charles has to clean isolettes he will work faster and with less attention to detail, in order to escape this assignment and get to his preferred task of rounding floors.

Implementing the Plan
- **Prevent**
  - Late: Put an alarm on Charles' iPod to sound at 8:55 and explain that if he is still on the van he might be late, but if he is at the hospital he is on time.
  - Rushing: Explain to Charles that clean isolettes keep babies healthy, key word “thorough”, implement first/ next cards so he knows his preferred task will come with completion of first task.
- **Teach**
  - Late: Teach coping mechanisms for what to do while waiting for the van
  - Rushing: Power Cards for review what Buzz would do in this situation
- **Respond**
  - When upset redirect Charles to what he should be working on
  - Remind to review Buzz cards and envision situation from Buzz perspective
  - Co-workers work with Charles to understand that he is not at fault for being late
  - Co- workers let him know he is not in trouble and get him started at work.
1. Buzz plays his iPod or listens to music while he waits for CARE Van
2. Buzz calls his boss at 8:15am if CARE Van has not picked him up at his house, to let him know that he might be late
3. Buzz also calls his mom to let her know that his van has not arrived yet
4. If Buzz is late to work he checks in with his supervisor when he arrives and knows that it is not his fault he is late!
5. Remember Buzz is early to work if he is sitting in the cafeteria at 8:55am when his alarm goes off

**Power Cards**

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**First/Next**

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**Daniel**

Patient Care Tech Assistant on ICU

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**Job Duties**

- Stock bedside carts with medical supplies
- Stock gloves & gowns outside rooms
- Stock gloves & hand sanitizer in rooms
- Remove soiled linen
- Specimen deliveries to lab
- Errands to get supplies from Environmental Services
- Assist with Patient Transport
- Stock & Sanitize isolation carts
- Clean patient & staff microwave (1x/week)
- Clean patient & staff refrigerators (1x/week)
- Stock nursing station w/ needles & syringes
- *Use par-excellence wand to buy supplies
- * 20 room unit

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**Unit Concerns & Request for Job Coach Support**

- Inconsistent Production
- Inconsistent Work Quality
- Low Endurance
- Avoids work by:
  - Wandering unit
  - Offering help to coworkers
  - Appearing busy
  - Reading in break room

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**A–B–C**

- Antecedent –
  - Job Coach is not on unit
- Behavior –
  - Wandering, reading in the break room, extended breaks throughout the day when not scheduled, not completing schedule, inaccurate work quality
- Consequence –
  - Coworker complaints to Job Coach
  - *Nothing that Daniel could feel the impact of*
Job Coach Imposed Strategy #1

- Prevent
  - Secretary on unit becomes authority and begins checking Daniel's work with him

- Teach
  - Ensure that Daniel understands expectations and how to properly complete each task
    - Change presentation of schedule
    - Attach stock list on drawers of each cart
    - Implement structured breaks using iTouch alarms & require that he check out and notify supervisor when he returns

- Respond
  - Direct supervisor provides correction, checks work & redirects
  - Positive Feedback
  - Additional responsibilities
  - Potential for increased work hours
  - Monthly evaluation which includes coworker comments

ICU Imposed Strategy

- Prevent
  - Secretary on unit becomes authority and begins checking Daniel's work with him

- Teach
  - Ensure that Daniel understands expectations and how to properly complete each task
    - Change presentation of schedule
    - Attach stock list on drawers of each cart
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Schedule
**Idioms, Social Skills, and Work Expectations**

- Individuals with ASD do not necessarily understand idioms or know what is expected of them at work or in social situations
  - Example: The High Road

"THE HIGH ROAD"

1. Say “I’m sorry”
2. Walk Away
3. Call Alissa/Supervisor

**Self monitoring is key**

**We must bring together**

- Transition Practices
- Employment Supports
- ASD Practices
- Independent Living Supports

- Resilience
- Independence
- Stability
- Security

**Closing Points**

- Evidence supports the work skills of individuals with ASD
- With the right supports, individuals across the spectrum can achieve success in adulthood!


