Let’s Get to Work: Best Practices in Employment Training for Young People

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Employment for Students & Young Adults with ASD

Lou Vismara: A Parent’s Perspective
- Young adults ~ intensive supports
- Steps to independence
- Calif. Legislation: Current & Future Opportunities

Pam Clark: An Educator’s Perspective
- Best practices in career preparation
- Evaluation & assessment of current best practices
- Bridgeport Vocational Education Center

Student & Job Coach
- Real-life experiences

Discussion & Questions
The Autism Epidemic – A Public Health Crisis

NATIONAL INCIDENCE OF ASD

1970 ~ 1 in every 10,000 births
1993 ~ 1 in every 1,000 births
1995 ~ 1 in every 750 births
1998 ~ 1 in every 500 births
2008 ~ 1 in every 150 births (1 in 94 males)
2010 ~ 1 in every 88 births (1 in 54 males)
2013 ~ 1 in every 50 births
   (1/31 males; 1/143 females)
QUESTION: What happens to kids with ASD?

ANSWER: THEY GROW UP!

CURRENT STATUS OF YOUTHS & ADULTS WITH ASD

- Youths with ASD ~ poor education & employment
- 61% of adults rely on their families
- 40% live at home with their parents.
- 82% ~ isolated.
- 67% ~ anxiety ..... 55% ~ depression because of a lack of support.
- Lack of support (60% of youths with ASD) ~ higher long-term needs
The Tsunami of Young Adults with Autism

Currently 6,000 adults with ASD are Regional Center (RC) consumers

This number will almost double in the next 5 years

By 2018, there will be more than 19,000 adults with ASD in the RC system

Most Regional Centers will see more than a 300% increase in the numbers of adults with ASD during the next decade

Purchase of Services: Costs related to age & diagnosis

• children without ASD.....$3,447
• children with ASD.....$6,993
• adults without ASD.....$15,935
• adults with ASD.....$36,704
Employment Challenges Facing Individuals with Autism

Transitional Youths & Adults with ASD: (Univ. of Miami Survey; 2008)

- 67% families lack knowledge of transition programs
- 78% no knowledge of job development agencies or professionals
- 74% wanted to work but were unemployed
- Of those employed, 74% worked < 20 hours per week
- 85% lived with parents or family members
Employment Challenges Facing Individuals with Autism in California

- California ranks 34th in disability employment
- Regional Center (RC) consumers ~ unemployment of 84.2%
- Unemployment among individuals with Autism >90%
- Only 9,297 participants in supported employment programs
- Only 17,623 RC consumers have an earned income
  Annual average: $4,824
The Easter Seals’
Living with Autism Study (2008)

Causes Of Poor Outcomes For Transitional Youths:

- Poorly implemented transition services from school to adult life

- Lack of coordination between educational behavioral, mental health, & vocational rehabilitation services

- Lack of understanding about employment potential

- Lack of adequate and appropriate supports

- Absence of qualified staff
Unlocking the Secrets to Finding & Keeping a Job
(lessons learned from the literature and best practices)

- Seamless transition with supports in place for work
- Interagency collaboration: More bang for the buck
- Lifelong learning: (continuing education, postsecondary institutions)
- Satisfying social life
- Independent/supported living options
- Parental & familial supports
- Jobs & employment opportunities
  - Choice and self-direction
  - Flexible, individualized services & supports
  - Appropriate benefits
  - Innovation
  - Workforce education & training
QUESTION: After knowing one person with autism, what generalizations can be made about ASD?

ANSWER: Nothing!

You just know one person with autism!
The Challenges of Implementing Vocational Best Practices: Co-Morbidities Associated with ASD

Other Medical Problems

- Genetic Abnormalities
- Autoimmune disorders
- Asthma
- Skin allergy or eczema
- Food allergy
- Sleep problems
- Headaches or migraines
- Diarrhea, colitis & other GI problems
- Ear infections
- Infections (PANDAS)
- Toxic & environmental factors
- Anxiety
- Behavioral & mental health disorders
Mental Health Co-Morbidities in Individuals with Autism

- 75% of ASD individuals ~ criteria for at least one other mental health disorder
- Multiple mental health disorders common ~ with ASD
  - 17% of ASD ~ two additional mental health disorders;
  - 24% exhibited three or more mental health disorders
- ADHD ~ 30% – 50% of individuals with ASD
- Anxiety disorder ~ 40% of individuals with ASD
- OCD ~ 10% – 33% of individuals with ASD
- Major Depression ~ 30% – 37% of individuals with ASD
- Suicide ideation ~ 14% of individuals with ASD

MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS USUALLY NOT DIAGNOSED ~ WITH ASD
Please Meet Mark Vismara

20 years of age with ASD requiring intensive behavioral supports
Limited expressive & receptive language
Prior history of severe aggression & SIB requiring residential placement (SoCal)
2011 returned to Sacramento

Current residence: own home in Sacramento; “Supported Living Services”
Housekeeping; cooking/meal preparation; yard work; shopping

Current Education: special education school for student~ develop. disabilities

Current vocational activities: Goodwill; Capital Christian Church

Social activities: adaptive tricycle; swimming; bowling; train-related activities
Ten Steps to Independence for Mark Vismara: Lou’s Perspective

1. Early Intervention approaches NOT effective
2. Individualized
3. Structured & Consistent
4. Limit “stressors” & demands
5. Communication
6. Desensitization
7. Back-chaining
8. Motivation
9. Persistence
10. Monitoring

**Video:** “A Day in the Life of Mark Vismara”
California Legislation Enacted in 2013:  
Current & Future Opportunities

AB 1041 (Chesbro): “Employment First Policy (EFP)”
- Regional centers ~ IPP for transition youth or adult
- Regional centers ~ provide information on competitive employment services, & supports, including postsecondary education
- State Council on Developmental Disabilities ~ brochure & web site

SB 468 (Emmerson) “Self-Determination Program”
- Sponsors: Disability Rights California & Autism Society of L. A.
- Regional center consumers ~ individual budget
- RC service and supports ~ consumer’s discretion
- Statewide Self-Determination Advisory Committee
- Contingent ~ federal funding approval
California Legislation Enacted in 2013: Current & Future Opportunities

**AB 86 (2013-1014 “Trailer Bill”): California Career Pathways Trust**

- Senator Darrell Steinberg initiative
- Focused on “linked-learning”
- $250 Million appropriation in the current budget
- Competitive grants for high schools, community colleges, & their business partners
- Create career pathways in high-need & high growth economic sector
- Addresses pressing problems in California’s educational system:
  - Skills gap
  - High dropout rate
- Information & “request for applications” pending from CDE
Closing Concepts: Providing Choices & Employment for Individuals with ASD

“A vision without action is merely a dream. Action without a vision is indeed a nightmare.” (Japanese Proverb)

“We cannot discover new oceans unless we have the courage to lose sight of the shore” (Andre Gide)

“If it fails, admit it frankly and try another. But above all else, try something” (F.D.R.)

STAY INVOLVED: “If we’re not at the table, then we’re on the menu!!”