

Removing Barriers to Employment for Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder

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Outline for Today

- Underlying Philosophies
- Techniques to secure employment for individuals with ASD – Strength-Based
- Strategies to maintain employment for individuals with ASD



Underlying Philosophies

• Pivotal Areas

- Background
- ABA vs PRT
- Validation
- Pivotal Areas for Treatment
 - Motivation
 - Initiations
 - Self-Control
 - Empathy

Underlying Philosophies

• Positive Behavioral Support

• Strength-Based

- Assessment
- Intervention

Underlying Philosophies

- Parent Education
- Intervention in Natural Settings
 - Assessment – Behavioral Assessments
 - Intervention
- Target Pivotal Areas

Adults with ASD



- Individuals with autism tend to work fewer hours and earned lower wages per week than nearly all other groups (Cimera & Cowan, 2009)
- Currently, few support systems exist to assist individuals with ASD in finding employment
- Employment leads to increases in cognition
unemployment leads to decreases

Partnership: DOR and Koegel Autism Center

- Collaboration to assist the influx of young adults on the autism spectrum
- Level of support after high school decreases
- Individuals with ASD are not traditional consumers and they require specialized social and behavioral support



Question Time!

- How many adults with autism are you currently working with?
 - None
 - 1-5
 - 6-10
 - More than 10



Autism Spectrum Disorder

- Preoccupation and restricted interest
- Motor mannerism
- Impairments in communication
- **Communication Deficits**
 - Inappropriate detail
 - Nonverbal pragmatics
 - Lack of social reciprocity
- **Social Difficulties**
 - Groups
 - Question-Asking

Communication Skills

- **Conversation Skills**
 - Question-asking
 - Greetings
 - Appropriate detail
 - Topics of mutual interest
 - Empathy
- **Nonverbal communication**
 - Eye contact
 - Posture
 - Facial expression



Techniques for improving communication

- Video based interventions
- Visual framework
- Self management
- Peer Socialization Groups



Video-based interventions

- **Increasing number of studies evaluating video-based interventions** (Darden-Brunson, Green, & Goldstein, 2005; Rayner, Denholm, & Sigafoos, 2009).
 - **Video Modeling: appropriate model** (Aspy & Grossman, 2007; Bandura, 1977; McCoy & Hermansen, 2007).
 - **Video Self-Modeling: self as model** (Apple, Billingsley, & Schwartz, 2005; Bellini & Akullina, 2007; Charlop & Milstein, 1989; Charlop-Christy & Kelso, 2003; Maione & Mirenda, 2006; McCoy & Hermansen, 2007)
 - **Point of View Modeling**
 - **Video Prompting (self or other)**

Intervention

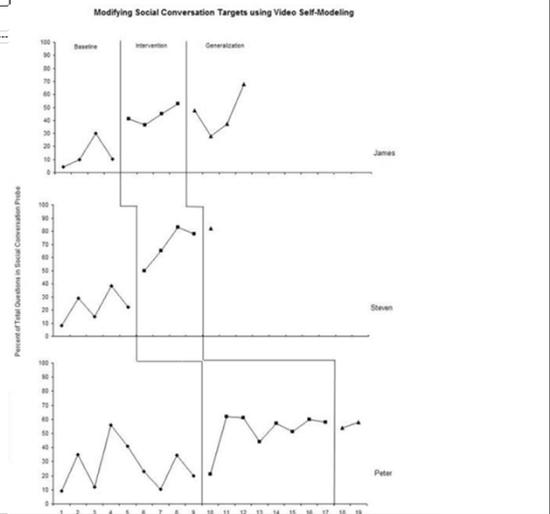
- Video Feedback: view and evaluate performance
(Mechling, 2005; Maione & Miranda, 2006; Rayner, Denholm, & Sigafoos, 2009)
 - ✦ Good Examples
 - ✦ “Needs Improvement” Examples
- Combination of one or more of these models with other interventions, i.e. self-management

Video feedback for question-asking

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Baseline No Questions, Awkward Pauses	Intervention Asking Questions

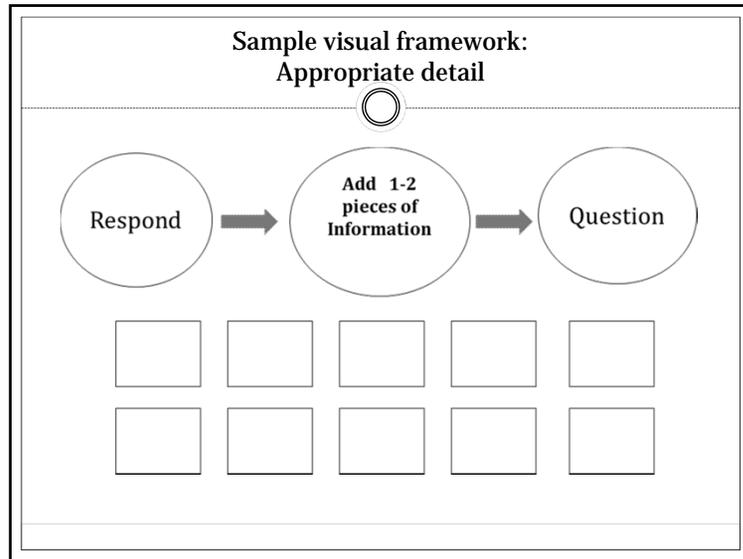
Research Results



Visual framework for appropriate detail

- Possible strength in visual perception
(Grandin, 1995; Boucher & Lewis, 1989; Quill, 1995).
 - Visual method of thinking
- Visual components combined with other interventions, i.e. self-management





Question Time!

- How often do you have clients who struggle with social conversation skills?
 - Never
 - Seldom
 - Occasionally
 - Often



Self-Management

- Initially used for adults without disabilities
- Applied to Children
- Successful Intervention for children with mild disabilities
- Researched for individuals with ASD

Self-Management

- Series of procedures where an individual is taught to identify and discriminate target behaviors, then monitor the absence or occurrence of the specific behavior, record the behavior, then deliver contingent reinforcement.
- Self-Management is a Positive Behaviors Support (PBS) strategy

Self-Management

- Define Behaviors
- Measure Behaviors (start with success)
- Set Goals and Identify reinforcers
- Design Monitoring System
- Discrimination
- Monitor
- Reward (can be independent)
- Fade

Target Behaviors

- Social Communication: Question-Asking, Responsiveness, Arranging activities
- Daily living: Hygiene, chores, Schoolwork
- Behaviors: talking, meltdowns, aggression, flexibility

Independent Living Skills: Daily Living Checklist

- Weekly checklist - Self management
 - Professional Skills
 - Independent Living Skills
 - Social Behavior
- Individualized for each client
- Flexible and adaptable for ability levels and target behaviors

Sample weekly checklist

	Sunday 9/9	Monday 9/10	Tuesday 9/14	Wednesday 9/15	Thursday 9/16	Friday 9/17	Saturday 9/18	Total	GOAL
MORNING									
Brush teeth	X		X	X	X			4	5
Deodorant		X	X	X	X		X	5	5
Appropriate clothes					X	X		2	3
EVENING									
Brought phone all day		X					X	2	3
Healthy Dinner	X			X	X	X		4	3
Wash hair in shower	X		X		X			3	2
Shave	X							1	1
Brush teeth				X	X	X	X	4	5
Social Activities		X		X		X		3	3
Bedtime before 1:00am	X			X	X			3	4
Grocery Shopping	X				X			2	1
Laundry							X	1	1
E-mail update to Dr. Cooper						X		1	1
								34	37
30-37 points: Board Game on Tuesday									

Sample weekly checklist

	Monday	Tuesday	Wed.	Thursday	Friday	TOTAL
AM: Wake up on time + morning routine + take meds						
PM: Take vitamin/medicine + set alarm						
DAILY LIVING SKILLS	/2	/2	/2	/2	/2	/10
On time to work/appointments						
Keep phone in pocket during work and meetings						
Stay at work until supervisor says it's ok to leave (instead of you saying it's time to leave, either wait until supervisor says it's time or ask if there is anything else that needs to be done before you leave)						
Offer additional help on the job at least once per day						
Keep an eye on assigned child at ALL times						
Provide positive praise to children						
Bring any needed materials to work/meetings						
Bring checklist to meetings						
Complete all assignments from Amber, Whitney, Kristen or others						
Avoid talking to self						
PROFESSIONAL	/10	/10	/10	/10	/10	/50
Be in common area of apartment for at least 30 mins						
Appropriate interactions with friends (no repetitive questions)						
Appropriate interactions with friends (positive, mutual topics)						
Practice question asking (earn points from clinicians)						
Make eye contact during conversations						
Refrain from yawning, fidgeting or stretching (earn points from clinicians)						
Avoid skin-picking						
Appropriate jokes/bvse-stories						
<30% heavy breathing						
Positive facebook posts						
SOCIAL	/10	/10	/10	/10	/10	/50
DAILY CHECKLIST	Possible Total = 110					/110
Inappropriate Statements (10)						
Disruptive Episodes (15)						
Total Points						/110

Total Points = 100 - 110 + Choose when to leave
 Every 2 pt below 100 = 5 min delay after work (99 points = 5 mins, 95 points = 25 mins)
 Morning Routine = shower, hair, shave, bandage, hang up towels, laundry away, trash away, make bed

Question Time!

• How much do your clients struggle with self-management?

- Never
- Seldom
- Occasionally
- Often



PEER INTERVENTIONS

Socialization

- Difficulties engaging in social activities are considered to be a core symptom of individuals with ASD (Muller, Schuler, & Yates, 2008)
 - Profound sense of isolation (Baumigner & Kasari, 2000)
 - Difficulty initiating social interactions (Matson, Matson, & Rivet, 2007)
 - Desire for intimacy and social engagement (Baumigner & Kasari, 2000)
 - Longing to contribute to one's community
- High co-morbidity of depression and anxiety associated with ASD (Frith, 2004; Howlin, 2000)

Structured Social Planning to Increase Socialization with Peers

1. Social Planning
 1. Motivational interests are identified
 2. Clinician creates a menu of at least three social activities based on participant's interests
 3. Adult with ASD selects activity
 4. Clinician assists in planning of the activity
2. Organizational skills
 1. Use of daily planner to document time, place, and activity for the week
3. Social Support
 1. Adult with ASD given the option to have a similar age peer attend the activity with them for additional support
 2. Peer mentor will model and provide feedback on adult's socialization during activity

Peer Training

- Similarly-aged peer
- Peer meets for supervision
- Peer provides feedback on community activities
- Peer provides support when necessary



Question Time!

- How difficult would it be to get neurotypical peers to volunteer in your community for a peer mentoring project for your clients?
 - Very Difficult
 - Somewhat Difficult
 - Slightly Difficult
 - Pretty Easy
 - Very Easy



Employment for individuals with ASD

- Studies show that for adults with ASD:
 - 1) Proportion in work ranges from 5% to 44% (Howlin, 2000)
 - 2) Proportion living independently ranges from 16 to 50% (Howlin, 2000)

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Pre-Employment Preparation

Resume and Cover Letter

- Strength based resume
- Professional writing skills

Applying to the job

- Networking
- On-line skills
- Completing applications
- Submitting applications

Pre-employment: Interview Skills

- Hygiene
- Greetings
- Nonverbal Behavior (eye contact, posture)
- Priming for common interview questions
- Appropriate topics
- Goodbyes
- Attire

Timeline for Post-Interview

Maintaining the Job

- On the job observation
- Job coaching
- Communication with supervisor
- Continued support to sustain position



Organization: Skills for the Workplace

- Choice in method of scheduling (phone, planner, computer, etc.)
- Weekly input of appointments and meetings (time, location, person)
- Set reminders for appointments



Behaviors in the workplace

- Stress management
- Time management
- Punctuality
- Flexibility in job tasks and hours



Communication: Skills for the Workplace

- Interacting with co-workers
- Interacting with supervisors
- Accepting feedback
- "Small talk"
- Office-appropriate conversation
- Group meetings



Collateral benefits of employment



Quality of life
Contribution to society
Independence



Co-morbid disorders
Long-term cost of services
Parental stress

Thank you!

- Department of Rehabilitation
- Eli and Edythe L. Broad Foundation
- Douglas Foundation
- Kind World Foundation
- Graduate Students
- Undergraduate Research Assistants
- Families who participate in our research

www.education.ucsb.edu/autism

