

Career Planning for Individuals With Autism Spectrum Disorders

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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.)

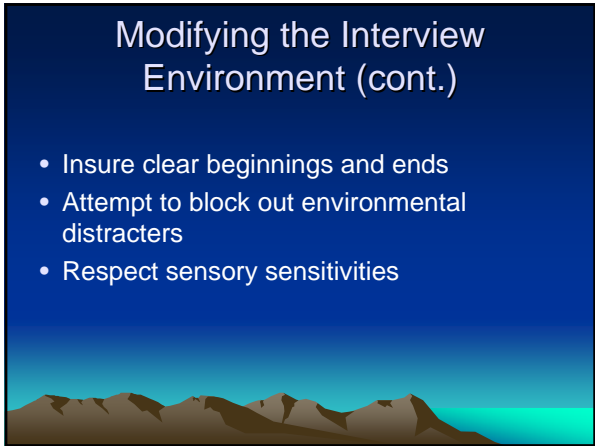
- How does the individual understand the passage of time?
- What environmental supports are used to help the student learn?

Modifying the Interview Environment

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

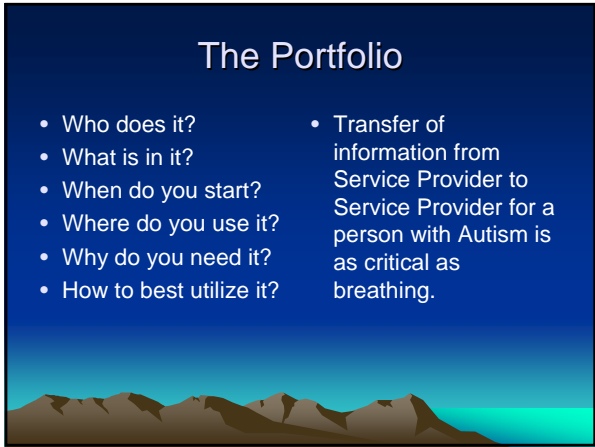
Modifying the Interview Environment (cont.)

- 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. Career Assessment

Interest Inventories



1. Job Shadowing / Work Samples

- Definition
- Benefits - realistic trial of jobs
- Limitations

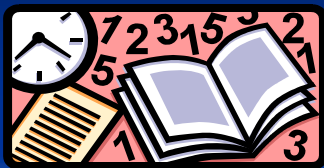
2. Wide Range Interest & Opinion Test (WRIOT)

- Definition - non-verbal, pictorial interest inventory
- Benefits - more choices, choice of most and least, no reading, no communication
- Limitations - outdated, limited choices

3. Reading Free Interest Inventory

- Definition - non-verbal, pictorial interest inventory
- Benefits - no reading, no communication needed
- Limitations - outdated, limited choices, unclear pictures

Achievement Tests – What the Individual Knows Based on Past Education and Experience



1. Peabody Individual Achievement Test-Revised (PIAT-R)

- Definition - achievement test of receptive vocabulary for standard English which relates to verbal intelligence.
- Benefits - one on one, easy » hard, can be given orally, short, no communication, no time limit
- Limitations -

2. Wide Range Achievement Test 4 (WRAT 4)

- Definition - achievement test that consists of three subtests: reading, spelling and arithmetic.
- Benefits - short, can be given orally
- Limitations - math is computational not reasoning, spelling is based on recall, writing is necessary

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3. Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test 4 (PPVT-4)

- Definition - achievement test that measures knowledge of the English vocabulary.
- Benefits - no communication is necessary, progresses from easy to hard.
- Limitation

Independent Living Skills / Adaptive Behavior



1. Real World Trial

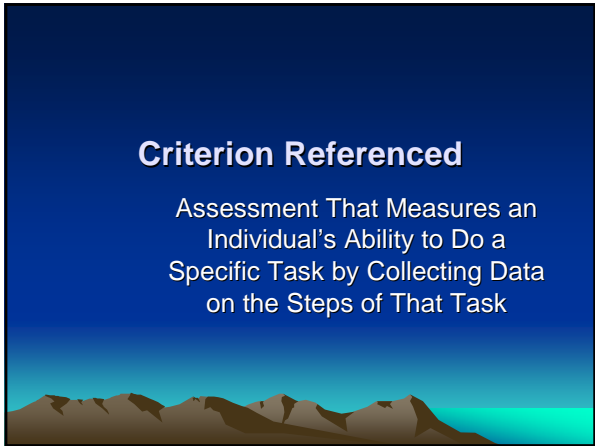
- Benefits - can test for generalization and test the individual's ability to live out in the community.
- Limitation -

2. The Street Survival Skills Questionnaire (SSQ)

- What it is - assessment of functional knowledge and skills important for living in the community.
- Benefits - one on one, verbal, easy » hard, closest to real world.
- Limitations - word choices may be confusing, may not generalize

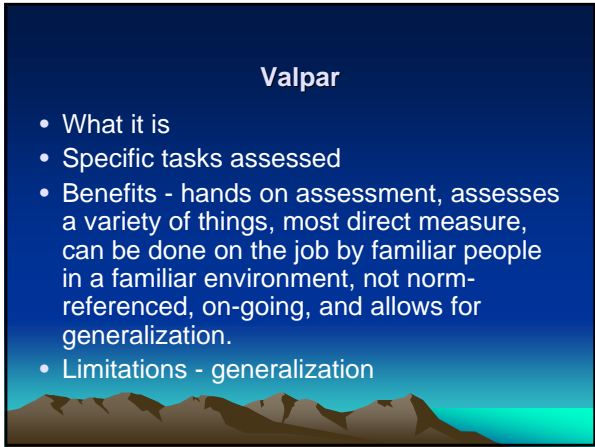
Criterion Referenced

Assessment That Measures an Individual's Ability to Do a Specific Task by Collecting Data on the Steps of That Task



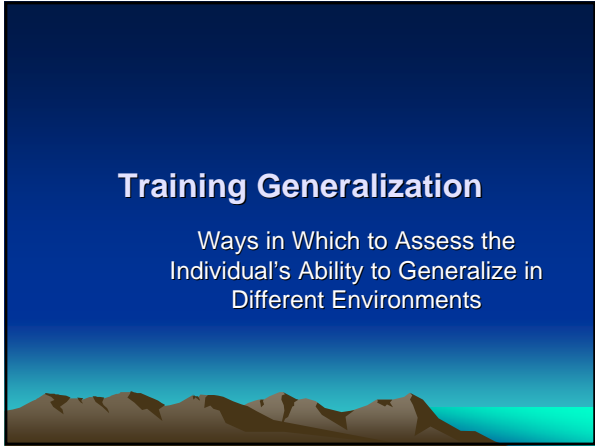
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- What it is
- Specific tasks assessed
- Benefits - hands on assessment, assesses a variety of things, most direct measure, can be done on the job by familiar people in a familiar environment, not norm-referenced, on-going, and allows for generalization.
- Limitations - generalization



Training Generalization

Ways in Which to Assess the Individual's Ability to Generalize in Different Environments




- Assessing the individual in two separate settings, i.e., quiet room vs. noisy room

Values - What the Individual Values (Reinforcers) Matched to the Work Environment to Ensure Job Tenure.
MINNESOTA WORK QUESTIONNAIRE

- What it is and what it measures - individual chooses from 20 values that are the most important to them.
- Modified test with pictures
- Benefits - helps to promote job tenure, job satisfaction and job satisfactoriness.
- Limitations -

Social Skills





1. Observation

Observing an Individual While They Are Interacting in the Work Setting

- Benefits – Observation of real life situations, ongoing, allows for observation in familiar environments.
- Limitations – If done in an unfamiliar environment or in a short time, the individuals' performance may not be done to the best of their potential

2. Social Interaction Checklist

Checklist of Different Interactions with Peers and Others in Different Situations in the Work Environment

- Benefits – Checklist of a variety of social interactions, observation of real life situations, ongoing, and allows for observation in familiar environments.
- Limitations – Same as observation

3. Observation Profile for Children With Asperger Syndrome

- What it is - gives a brief work picture of the child within the workplace setting, noting positive points as well as difficulties.
- What it measures - social interaction, social communication, social imagination and flexible thinking, motor organization skills
- Benefits -
- Limitations

Issues that first need to be considered when assessing individuals with autism.

- The individual with autism's familiarity with the individual doing the assessment
- The individual with autism's familiarity with the environment that the assessment is taking place in
- The amount of time that is given for the assessment (for example, 3 hours versus 3 days).

Issues that first need to be considered (cont.)

- Knowing the individual with autism and whom they relate to (for example, " Does this individual relate better to or feel more comfortable with males or females?).
- Are breaks going to be given during the assessment?
- Are there distractions in the environment that the assessment is taking place in (for example, background noise or lighting)?

3. Workplace Supports

Perspectives

- 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

4. 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

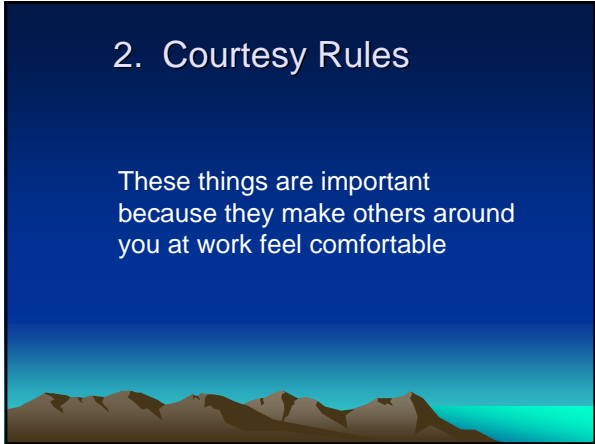
Defined as things that are considered extremely bad by a culture and are most time illegal

Examples:

- Stealing someone's work
- Hitting a peer

2. Courtesy Rules

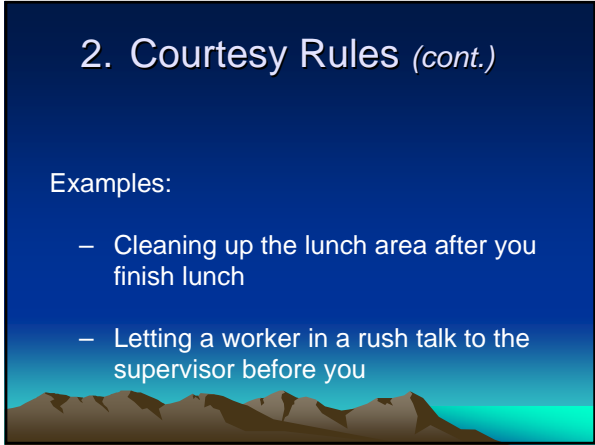
These things are important because they make others around you at work feel comfortable



2. Courtesy Rules *(cont.)*

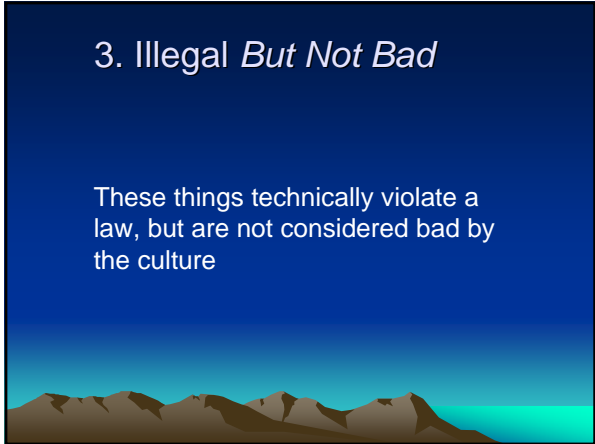
Examples:

- 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

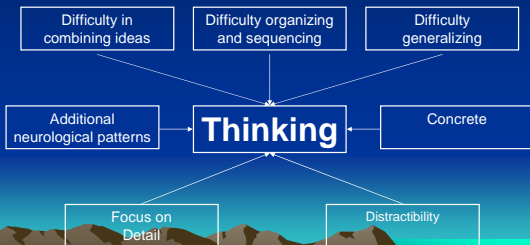
Social Support Strategies

- Social Stories
- Rule Cards
- Role-play/Rehearsal

Social Support Strategies (cont.)

- Scripting
- Peer Tutoring
- Social Communication Groups

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

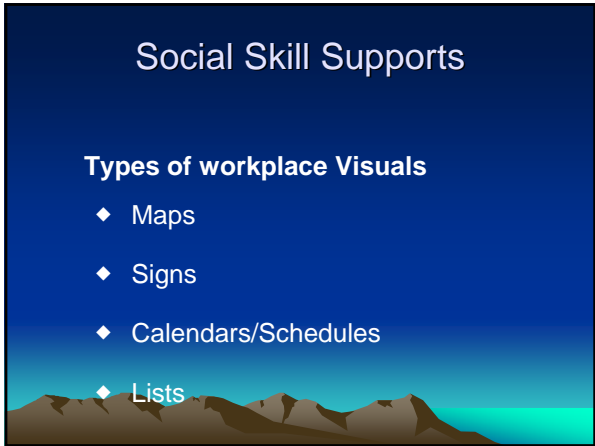
1. Visuals:

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

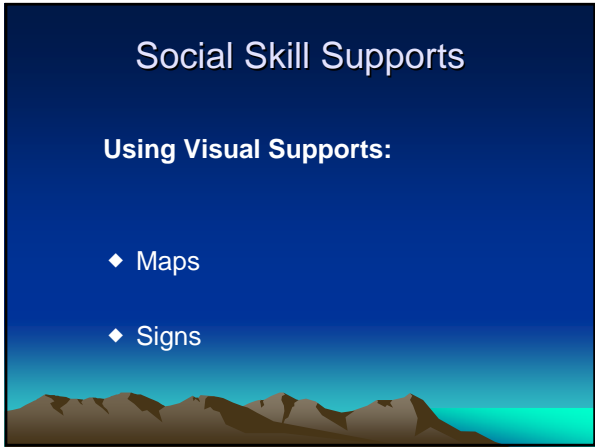
- ◆ Maps
- ◆ Signs
- ◆ Calendars/Schedules
- ◆ Lists



Social Skill Supports

Using Visual Supports:

- ◆ Maps
- ◆ Signs

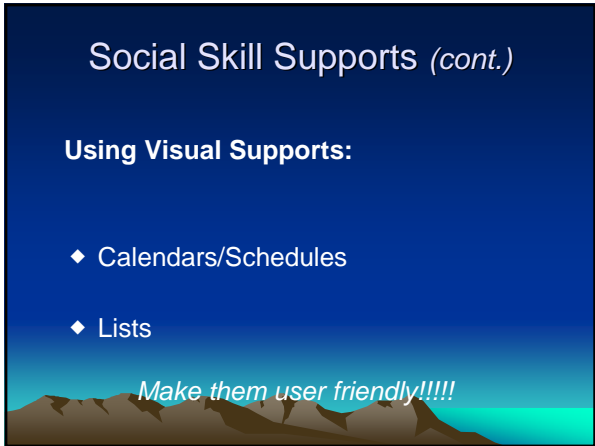


Social Skill Supports (cont.)

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