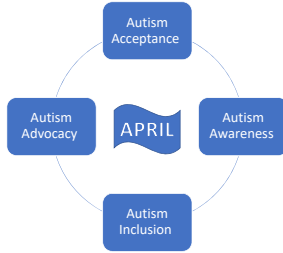


## Autistic Adults and Employment




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### Stacey Herman, MS Ed., CESP

- Assistant Vice President of Neurodiversity and Community Workforce Development at Kennedy Krieger Institute

### Valeria Swartz-Diaz, MS, CCC-SLP

- Speech-language pathologist at Center for Autism and Related Disorders (CARD)

### Maureen van Stone, Esq., MS

- Director of the Maryland Center for Developmental Disabilities (MCDD) at Kennedy Krieger Institute

### Elgiz Sener, Ph.D.

- Clinical neuropsychologist at CARD, Supervisor at Ashland

### Tyler Shallue

- Health Screener at Kennedy Krieger Institute




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## Autism & Employment

*"Ever since Richard has left school, he has always wanted to do work and make sure his skills and talents will be recognized and valued by his future employers. First, he found it difficult to highlight his experience and aptitude when he completed job applications or when he needed to express himself well at job interviews, possibly due to some of his characteristics, associated with autism. Nonetheless, when he started volunteering at a local charity shop, he felt great pride, which only increased when he secured his first paid position as a customer assistant at a grocery store, especially since he did not access any additional support from governmental bodies or from other support services. All seemed well for a while until several complaints were made both by customers and Richard's colleagues, making remarks about his manner, communication style and behavior. Ultimately, it turned out that while Richard enjoyed the day-to-day tasks and the opportunity to better himself, in contrast with a customer-facing environment, he preferred to be outdoors in nature, where the dynamic with visitors was very different. Therefore, changing jobs had a particularly positive effect on Richard and it helped him find a more suitable career pathway".*

Farkas, Kargas, & Mendy, 2021




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## Autism & Employment

... work is not a universally positive experience. Poorly designed jobs, work that is not organized well, difficult work environments, poorly trained managers and a lack of understanding of human behaviour in the workplace can create or exacerbate mental health conditions. For some people with physical or mental health conditions or disabilities, a lack of the right support at the right time from employers can make finding and keeping a meaningful job difficult. (Weinberg & Doyle, 2017, p. 3)



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## Employment Benefits

- Monetary compensation
- Social identity and status
- Social contacts and support: reduces isolation
- A means of structuring and occupying time
- Activity and involvement
- A sense of personal achievement
- Greater independence



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## Autism & Employment

- Unemployed (without a job)
- Underemployed (in jobs that underutilize their knowledge, skills and experience)
- 'Malemployed' (in jobs for which they are particularly unsuited)



Baldwin, Costley, & Warren, 2014



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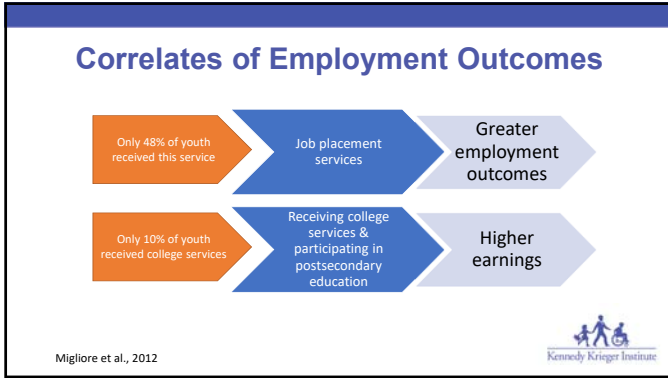
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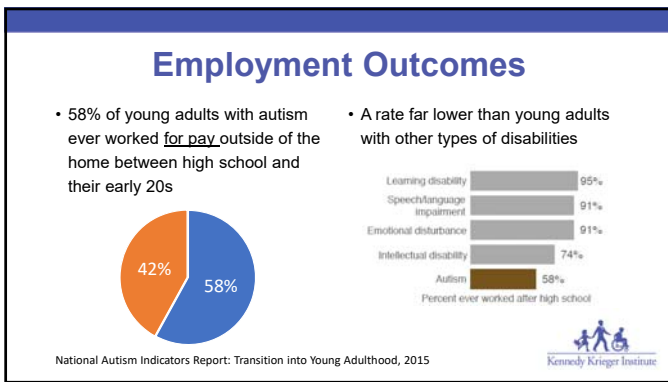
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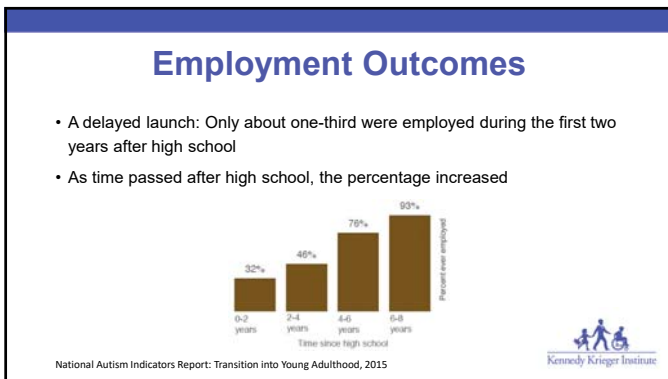
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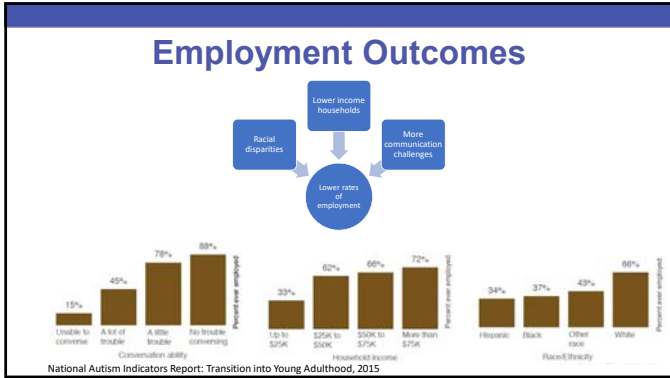
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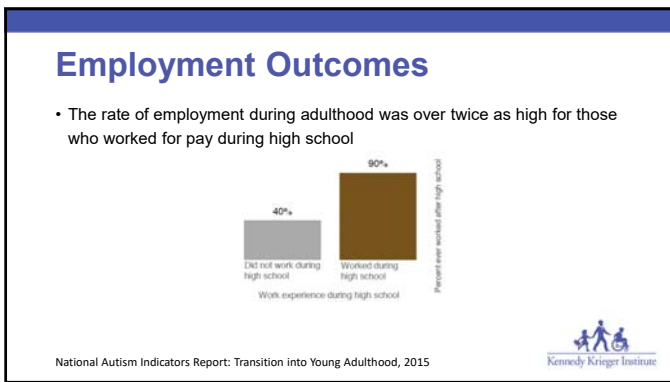
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*What can we do to improve these outcomes?*

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## Clinical Perspective: Communication Skills and Employment

Valeria Swartz-Diaz, MS, CCC-SLP  
Speech-language pathologist  
Center for Autism and Related Disorders (CARD)  
Kennedy Krieger Institute




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## Clinical Perspective: Communication Skills and Employment




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## Communication Skills and Employment: Meeting Communication Needs



Steps to Success	
1. Get Attention	
2. Respond to name	
3. Follow simple directions	
4. Respond to simple questions	
5. Use simple words	
6. Use simple phrases	
7. Use simple sentences	
8. Use simple paragraphs	




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## Communication Skills and Employment: Areas to Support

- Answering and asking questions
- Conflict resolution
- Demographic information
- Goal setting
- Hygiene and self-care
- Interviewing
- Language organization
- Making a resume and applying to a job
- Problem solving
- Seeking assistance and clarifying instructions
- Self-advocacy
- Shopping and money management
- Transportation and mobility
- Understanding and maintaining interpersonal relationships
- Understanding non-verbal language




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## Communication Skills and Employment




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## Transition and Employment

Stacey Herman M.S Ed., CESP  
AVP, Neurodiversity and Community Workforce Development




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## Transition Time



**School**


- Educate yourself on Developmental Disabilities, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Pre-ETS Services
- Complete Applications (i.e. DD Services)
- Transition Plan
- Re-evaluate Student Needs and Related Services Regularly

**Transition**

- Work-based Learning
- Employment Training Programs (i.e. Project SEARCH, Project Access)
- Tour, Apply, and Identify an Adult Service Provider Agency
- Collaborative Process to Transition from School to Adult Provider

**Adult Services**

- Person-centered Planning Process (needs and goals)
- Person-centered Plan Approval
- Waiver Approval
- Begin Services with Agency




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## Creating a Meaningful Transition



- Focus on a Person-Centered Approach
- Apply and Eligibility of Services (DDA, DORS)
- Creating Integrated Settings with Natural Supports
- Consistent Communication with all Stakeholders
- Plan with School Team (early)
- Utilize Pre-Employment Transition Services
- Engage in Work-based Learning Programs at your School
- Build Partnerships Outside of School (network)
- Collaborative Approach
- Cellphone Etiquette
- Fill the Gap – DORS Services
- Be creative, have fun!




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## Barriers to Employment



- Transportation
- Stigma
- Self-Disclosure
- Job History and Experience
- Disability Awareness
- Respect
- Behaviors
- Communication
- Social Skills
- Attitudes of Colleagues
- Loss of Benefits
- Education and Training
- Application and Interview Process
- Unconscious Bias
- Management




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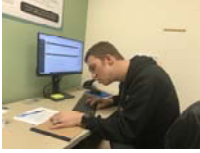
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### Breaking Down Barriers



- Executive Champion
- Culture
- Screening and Interview
- Universal Design
- Inclusive Practices




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### Modifications



- Open vs. Closed Office Space
- Extended Training Time
- Natural Supports
- Fragrance Free
- Lighting
- Telework
- Visual Schedule
- Visual Checklists
- Organizational Systems (i.e. stock room)
- Fidgets
- Movement Breaks




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### Communication Strategies

- Response Choices
- Wait Time
- Facial Expressions
- Cell Phone
- Body Language
- Assistive Technology
- Visuals




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## Interview Modifications




Traveling Interviews




Work Trial




Job Tour




Modified Questions



Environment (distractions)



Rethink "Social" Skills




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## My Employment Experience

Tyler Shallue  
Health Screener, Kennedy Krieger Institute




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## Project SEARCH Experience

- Participated during 2020-2021 academic year
- Worked in two main internships
- Campus Security at Greenspring Campus
- Training and eTracking Solutions
- Combination of in person and virtual formats
- Enjoyed learning new job development skills like communication, advocacy, and teamwork
- Opened the door to a part time job with Training and eTracking


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## CORE Foundations

- Worked virtually for Training and eTracking from July to November 2021
- Now am currently a COVID-19 health screener for the 801 building
- Began collaborations with the safety team by carrying out a fire drill for our building
- Began exploring safety plans during my time as a health screener
- Great experience in identifying potential career interests and improving job skills




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## Learn More About Neurodiversity at Work

Email: [Hermanst@KennedyKrieger.org](mailto:Hermanst@KennedyKrieger.org)  
 Scan the QR Code to Visit our Website




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## Legal Aspects Related to Transition to Adulthood

Maureen van Stone, Esq., MS  
 Director, Maryland Center for Developmental Disabilities  
 Founding Director, Project HEAL (Health, Education, Advocacy, and Law)




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## Transition Planning



- Under federal law and regulations, transition planning for children with disabilities must begin at age 16 (more than half of the states begin at age 14)
- Transition planning should include the child with a disability and their parent or guardian
- Transitioning planning should include postsecondary goals (or outcomes) for education or training, employment, and independent living (if appropriate)
- Transition planning should include linkages to other State agencies and organizations, who provide adults services and supports for individuals with disabilities




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## Post-Secondary Education



- There is a shift from **entitlement** to services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to **eligibility** for adult services and supports
- A student with a disability who needs accommodations or modifications from their college or university will need to provide documentation or evidence (e.g., a neuropsychological evaluation) of the need for an accommodation(s) at their own expense
- Most colleges or universities have a Disability Support Services office to support the student with a disability
- Each semester, the student will need to meet with their professors to discuss their accommodations




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## Disclosure



- Disclosure is **voluntary**
- Individuals with disabilities are not required to disclose to their postsecondary educational institutions or employers that they have a disability, unless they require an accommodation(s)
- IDEA no longer applies; however, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and/or the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) may apply to colleges or universities
- The ADA may apply to employment settings
- The individual should weigh the pros and cons to disclosure in both postsecondary settings and their workplace




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## Adult Guardianship

- The term may be referred to as a "conservatorship" in some states
- The state laws, regulations, and forms may vary from state-to-state
- Adult guardianship should be a last resort, when all other less restrictive alternatives have failed
- Adult guardianships are formal court proceedings that require the introduction of evidence
- The proceedings involve a judge, who evaluates the evidence, and issues a decision
- The proceedings involve attorneys, who represent the person seeking guardianship of a person and/or property, and an attorney representing the interests of the alleged disabled person
- The judge may grant guardianship of a person, property, or both, to one or more individuals or organizations
- There are court fees associated with guardianship proceedings




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## Alternatives to Guardianship

**Advance Directives** – appoints someone to make decisions when they cannot

**Advance Directives for Mental Health** – appoints someone to make mental health treatment decisions (e.g., medications, mental health programs, or psychiatric hospitals) when they cannot

**Statutory Powers of Attorney** – allows someone to make financial decisions on their behalf

**Trusts** – umbrella terms for a variety of trusts (e.g., living trust, special needs trusts, or joint trusts)

**Supported Decision-Making** – a process that enables individuals with disabilities to make their own decisions whenever possible, with the support of a trusted family member or friend

*Based on the literature, there are important considerations such as promoting the autonomy of the individual and their own self-determination, while protecting them from harm in certain situations*




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## Resources

- [ANCOR Report](#)
- [ODEP](#)
- [Person-Centered Planning](#)
- [Maryland DDA Eligibility Application](#)
- [Division of Rehabilitation Services Referral](#)
- [Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services](#)
- [Kennedy Krieger Institute Resource Finder](#)
- <http://www.supporteddecisionmaking.org/>




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## Resources

- Organization for Autism Research: <https://researchautism.org/how-we-help/self-advocates/employment/>
- Job Accommodation Network: <https://askjan.org/>
- Job Applications: <https://www.job-applications.com/>



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## Contact Information

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Maureen van Stone  
[vanstone@kennedykrieger.org](mailto:vanstone@kennedykrieger.org)



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