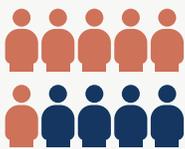


PERCEPTIONS OF BARRIERS AND FACILITATORS FOR

Individuals with Autism in Job Interviews

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Approximately 58% of young adults with autism have ever worked between high school and their early 20s. In addition, this group is disproportionately under-employed compared to their peers without an autism diagnosis, and those with other neurodiversity characteristics.

This project identified barriers and enablers of job acquisition and retention for individuals with autism. There was specific focus on:



Improving individuals with autism's performance in the interview process



Improving the work environment for individuals with autism



How employers may alter their interview practices to support individuals with autism



INDIVIDUALS PARTICIPATED

Our study included semi-structured individual and focus group interviews with:

- Employers with autism affirmative hiring programs
- Community employment service providers
- Educational representatives (career counselors) who have experience in working with Autistic people in the employment process
- People with autism

The interviews with employers and service providers consistently identified that interviewees often struggled with the interview process in specific ways

Incomplete answers to questions. e.g., giving “yes/no” answers to open-ended questions

Struggling to understand the context of unstructured questions, e.g., “tell me about yourself”

Managing and regulating emotion to unexpected events or questions during an interview.

Employers, service providers, and individuals with autism all described the need for more coaching and practice with both:



Social interaction and emotional management components



Demonstrating requisite skills and knowledge in the interview

Employers and service providers should provide candidates with:

- + MORE KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT TO EXPECT PRIOR TO THE INTERVIEW**
- + MODIFY OR REMOVE OPEN-ENDED AND HYPOTHETICAL QUESTIONS IN FAVOR OF MORE DIRECT QUESTIONS DEMONSTRATING JOB SKILLS**
- + PROVIDE MORE GUIDANCE AND FEEDBACK DURING THE INTERVIEW PROCESS.**