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Oklahoma Transition Institute

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You + Us = IMPACT

Transition Planning for Students with Autism: A Recipe for Success

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Learning Objectives

- Participants will apply the Taxonomy for Transition Programming 2.0 (Kohler, Gothberg, Fowler, and Coyle, 2016) for students affected by autism.

- Participants will be able to design and apply individualized, evidence-based supports and services when planning post-secondary transition with students affected by autism.

- Participants will employ a Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) for students who display challenging behavior and be able to communicate the supports as a part of the transition plan leading to individualized student success.

Why do we use a recipe?

- We need to know what ingredients are necessary to plan and empower students for success.
- We need the appropriate tools for the job.
- If we don’t know the directions, we are left to guessing what to do.

Employment Statistics

- 15% -18% of disabled people are employed as compared to 87.7% of non-disabled people

- Only 10-15% of autistic adults **with a college education** are employed = 85-90% unemployed

- That means if your district graduates 20 students with autism, only 2 will be employed. *Other sources cite this number to be closer to 97%.

- SAP is a software giant that has firmly established itself as a pioneer in incorporating autistic people into the workforce. In October 2019 reported a 90% retention rate of hires that were on the autism spectrum.
- The Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation (Freddie Mac) partnered with the Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN) to create an Autism Internship Program aim to pair their business needs with the capabilities of autistic workers.
- J.P. Morgan Chase and Co. discovered that more than 300 autistic employees are 48% faster and 92% more productive than their neurotypical employees. They report that autistic employees were as much as 140% more productive than their peers.
- Safeway employs over 10,000 adults with disabilities, thousands of which are autistic.

Autistic Workers and Productivity

As awareness of autism has grown over the years, more companies have gradually opened their doors to welcome new autistic employees and so, are offering jobs for autistic people. You might be amazed by which companies in particular have made the path more clear for people with autism to obtain work!

Sources: SAP, Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN), J.P. Morgan Chase and Co., Vercida, Progressive Grocer

Housing Statistics

- 35% of adults with autism need 24-hour support
- 87% of adults with autism live with their parents but only 22% want to live there
- A 22% expansion is residential supports nationwide is needed to meet the needs of housing for people with disabilities

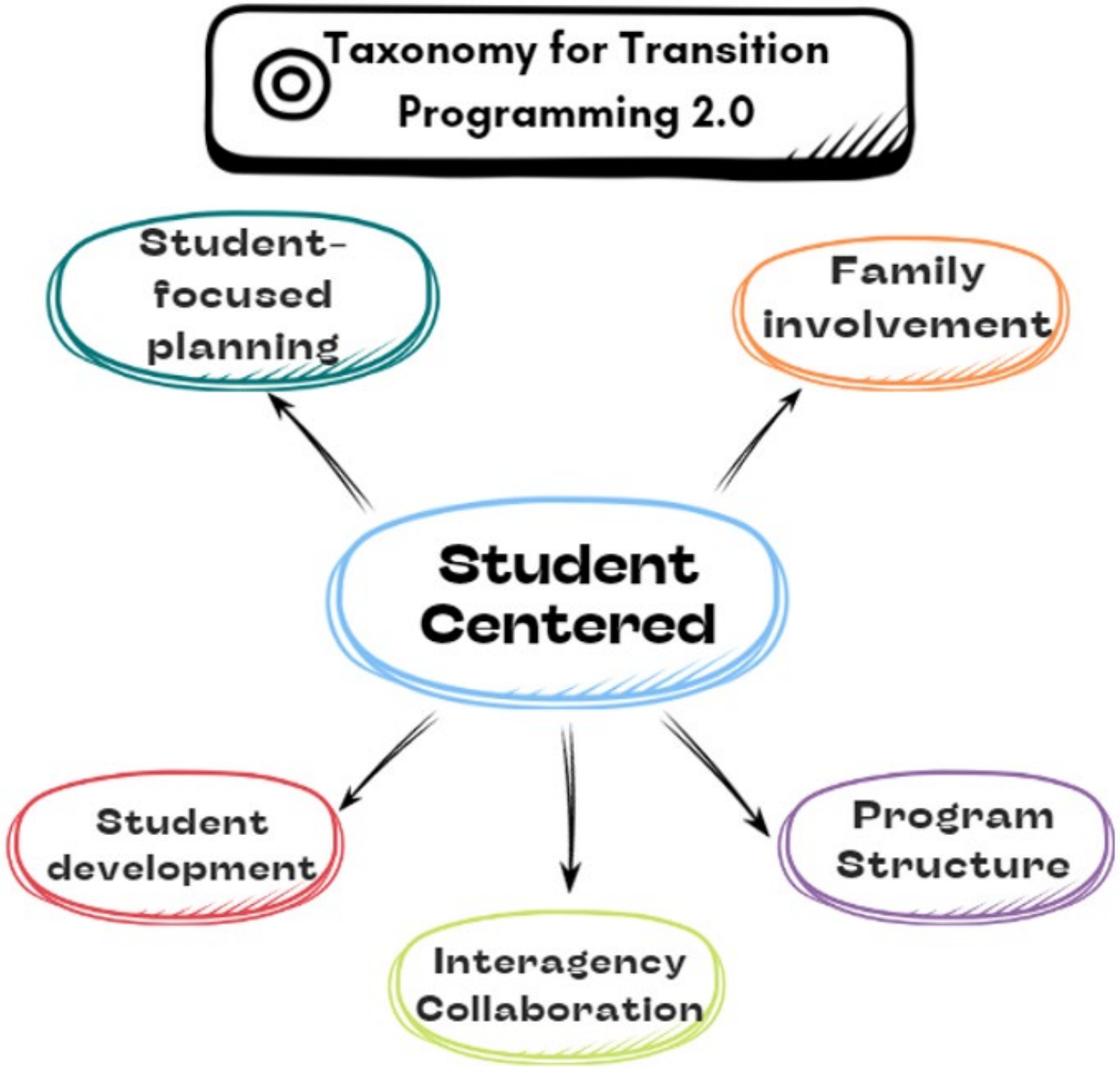
Quality of life - 1

- 39% of individuals with autism no longer see friends after high school
- 53% were not invited to social activities with friends for more than a year after high school
- 67% of people with autism are victims of abuse
- When students with autism finish high school, their educational services stop. The emphasis goes from skill development to care.

Quality of life - 2

- The coming decade is expected to see about one million autistic youth enter adulthood, and history suggests that obstacles abound.
- Employment plays a vital role in the quality of life and identity of an individual and should be available to all
- Unemployment has been shown to negatively impact individual mental health and functioning.
- Society would benefit greatly from the talents of autistic individuals through increased employment and career pathways along with increased tax contributions and reductions in long-term government-funded programs.

Key Ingredients



Student-focused planning

- **IEP development**
  - Student interests and preferences are document
  - Specific and measurable post-secondary goals (education, career, community participation, independent living)
- **Student participation**
  - Student actively participates in IEP planning and the meeting
  - Self-determination is facilitated
- **Planning strategies**
  - Reserve adequate time to complete the meeting as well as facilitate participation by the student and family
  - Comprehensive, age-appropriate transition assessments addressing achievement, intelligence, behavior, career aptitude, skills, interests, preferences, and readiness

Family involvement

- **Family training or preparation**
  - Prepare for the planning process, setting high expectations, promoting student's self-determination, advocacy, facilitating community experiences
- **Family involvement**
  - Families' cultural background and knowledge of and experience with their child informs the IEP
  - Families provide information about their child either orally or in writing
  - Families participate in the entire transition planning process
- **Family empowerment**
  - Structured method to identify family needs
  - Students and families linked with adult service providers during transition planning

Student development

- **Assessment** - Formative assessment must drive academic instruction
- **Academic skills** - Address academic skill development, academic strategies, and academic behaviors
- **Life, social, and emotional skills** - Address independent living, interpersonal, leisure, transportation, social, and autonomy skills
- **Employment and occupational skills** - Career planning and soft-skills, work experience training
- **Student supports** - Identify what accommodations are necessary, what natural supports may be in place, what peer or community supports may need to be built or accessed

Ensuring Evidence-Based Programming - 1

- **Program characteristics**
  - Transitions are addressed through all educational levels (preschool to high school)
  - Outcome oriented

- **Program evaluation**
  - Data-driven systems to continuously monitor drop-out risks, attendance, behavior, course completion, retentions, social performance

- **Strategic planning**
  - Including multiple stakeholders from relevant partners
  - Measurable goals and outcomes

Ensuring Evidence-Based Programming - 2

- **Policies and procedures**
  - Support the implementation of evidence-based practices for transition

- **Resource development and allocation**
  - Personnel development is provided for knowledge and skill development, culturally responsive planning with families, and creating a welcoming school climate

- **School climate**
  - Supports a sense of trust and safety, has clearly defined expectations, welcoming to all stakeholders

Interagency collaboration

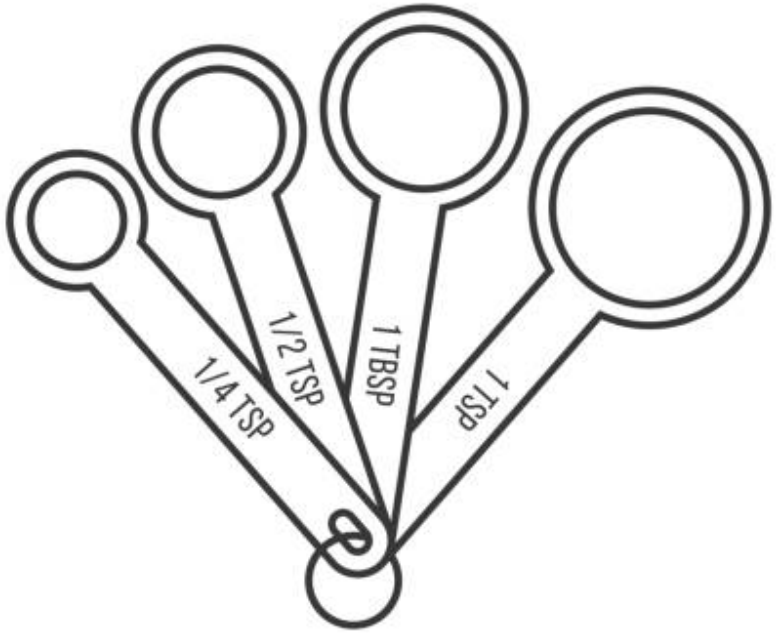
- **Collaborative framework**
  - Interagency coordinating body that includes students, parents, educators, service providers, community agencies, postsecondary institutions, employers, and other relevant stakeholders
  - Established methods of communication among all service providers
  - Roles and responsibilities clearly articulated
- **Collaborative service delivery**
  - School staff, VR counselors, and community service providers engage in planning meetings with students and families
  - Student and family linked with appropriate provider to assist with financial planning, health care system navigating, adult disability or mental health services, and transportation

Tools

Developing independent living skills

Developing opportunities for community participation

Developing skills to participate in future education and/or career goals



Develop independence skills for all ages

1. Strengthen communication
2. Introduce a visual schedule
3. Work on self-care skills
4. Teach how to ask for a break
5. Work on household & other chores
6. Practice money skills
7. Teach community safety
8. Build leisure skills
9. Build vocational skills

Develop opportunities for community participation

1. Picking the right activities
    - Consider likes & dislikes, motivation, what are your goals for the activity, what are the student's challenges, are there behavior considerations that need to be planned for, does the student need one-on-one supports to participate

2. Transportation and travel

3. Safety
    - Interacting with first responders
    - Preventing abuse

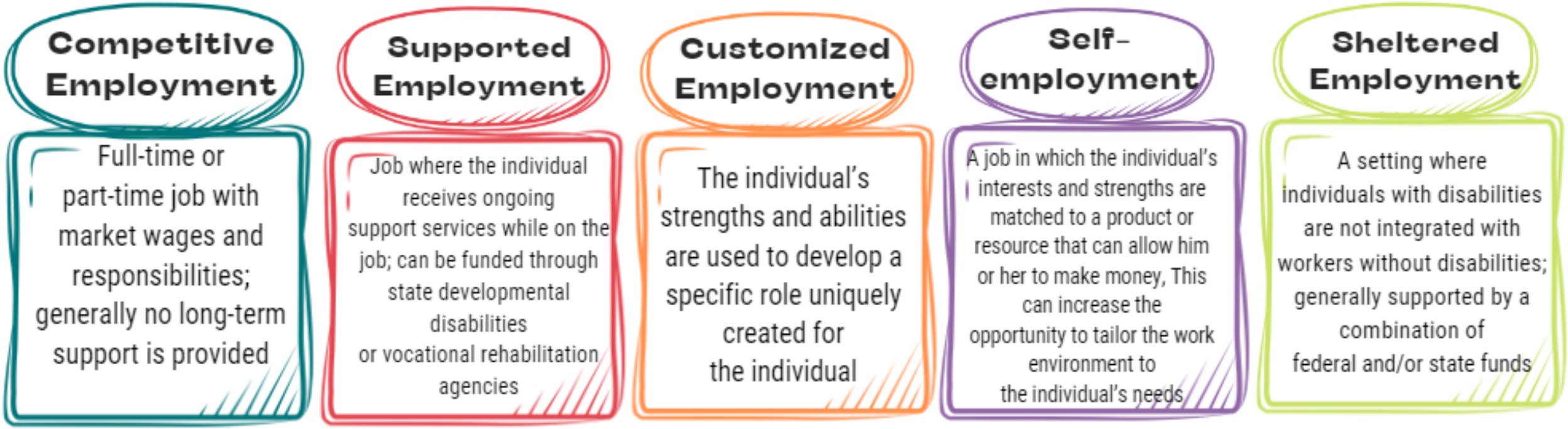
Differences between high school and college

High School	College
• All students have a right to an education • Protections include IDEA, Section 504, ADA • Team designs the IEP • School district ensures that it is implemented • Modifications may be made to learning standard • Related services are provided • Transportation is provided • Parent is primary advocate while students learn to become a self-advocate	• College education is a privilege, not a right • Protections include Section 504 and ADA • Student responsible for providing documentation of disability • Student identifies their needs • Student is responsible for their progress • Accommodations may be utilized • Personal services are the student's responsibility • Transportation is not provided • Students are expected to be their own advocates to the best of their ability

Developing skills for postsecondary education opportunities

- **Four-Year College -** Self-advocacy skills are very important in postsecondary education. The individual must know how to ask for necessary services and accommodations, such as housing supports, extended time on exams and access to assistive technology.
- **Community College -** A 2013 study, found that community colleges may play a particularly important role in fostering transition into productive lives for individuals with autism. The study also found that graduation rates are higher when college students with autism start in a community college, especially those focused on technology, engineering or math. Skills that need to be developed in include life skills like money management and problem solving.
- **Vocational/Technical Trade Schools –** Hands-on learning experience in a variety of fields. Some may have programs that foster academic skills and others opportunities such as internships.

Develop skills to participate in future education and/or career goals



Workplace communication skills - 1

- **Using Social Amenities:** Phrases such as please, thank you and you're welcome are simple, short and easily taught.
- **Using Appropriate Greetings:** Some students fail to greet or acknowledge others; others greet people over and over again. Teaching the appropriate use of greetings can be helpful.
- **Terminating Conversations:** A common complaint of peers, supervisors and coworkers is that the worker or participant with autism walks away while being spoken to.
- **Accepting Correction:** Many people do not like to receive correction or criticism, which can be especially upsetting to an individual with autism. Social skills training may need to focus on teaching the student exactly what to say and do when given correction.

Workplace communication skills - 2

- **Responding Assertively:** People with autism can sometimes be taken advantage of. Social skills training may be required to teach them how to stop this from happening, for example, how to say, “Leave me alone” if someone is bothering them.
- **Accepting Suggestions:** If a teacher or parent provides a suggestion, this can sometimes result in a refusal to take the suggestion, and can even serve as a trigger to acting out behavior. Providing the student with general instructions on the need to accept suggestions followed by the opportunity to practice this skill can be effective.
- **Asking for Help and Revealing a Problem:** One of the most important social skills is to ask for help when it is needed. In either the work or school setting, social skills training can be used to teach individuals how to ask for help and how to talk to others about a problem.

Steps

Putting evidence-based strategies to work

Evidence-based practices - 1

Project SEARCH https://oklahoma.gov/okdrs/students/transition/project-search.html

- A 9-month transition-to-work internship program that utilizes an intensive community-based employment internships model for youth and young adults with a wide range of disabilities. There is an adapted component specifically for autistic individuals.
- The intervention includes the addition of applied behavior analysis techniques regarding behavior supports—functional behavioral assessment, task analysis, repeated trials of discrete tasks, behavioral rehearsal, prompting, self-management and reinforcement procedures along with a social communication curriculum, and the use of visual supports and role playing practice.
- PS+ASD has been shown to be effective in increasing attainment and long-term continuation of competitive employment for autistic students with 73–87% obtaining competitive employment, and an 80% employment retention rate.

Evidence-based practices - 2

Division TEACCH (Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication Handicapped Children and Adults) Supported Employment Program https://teacch.com/research/

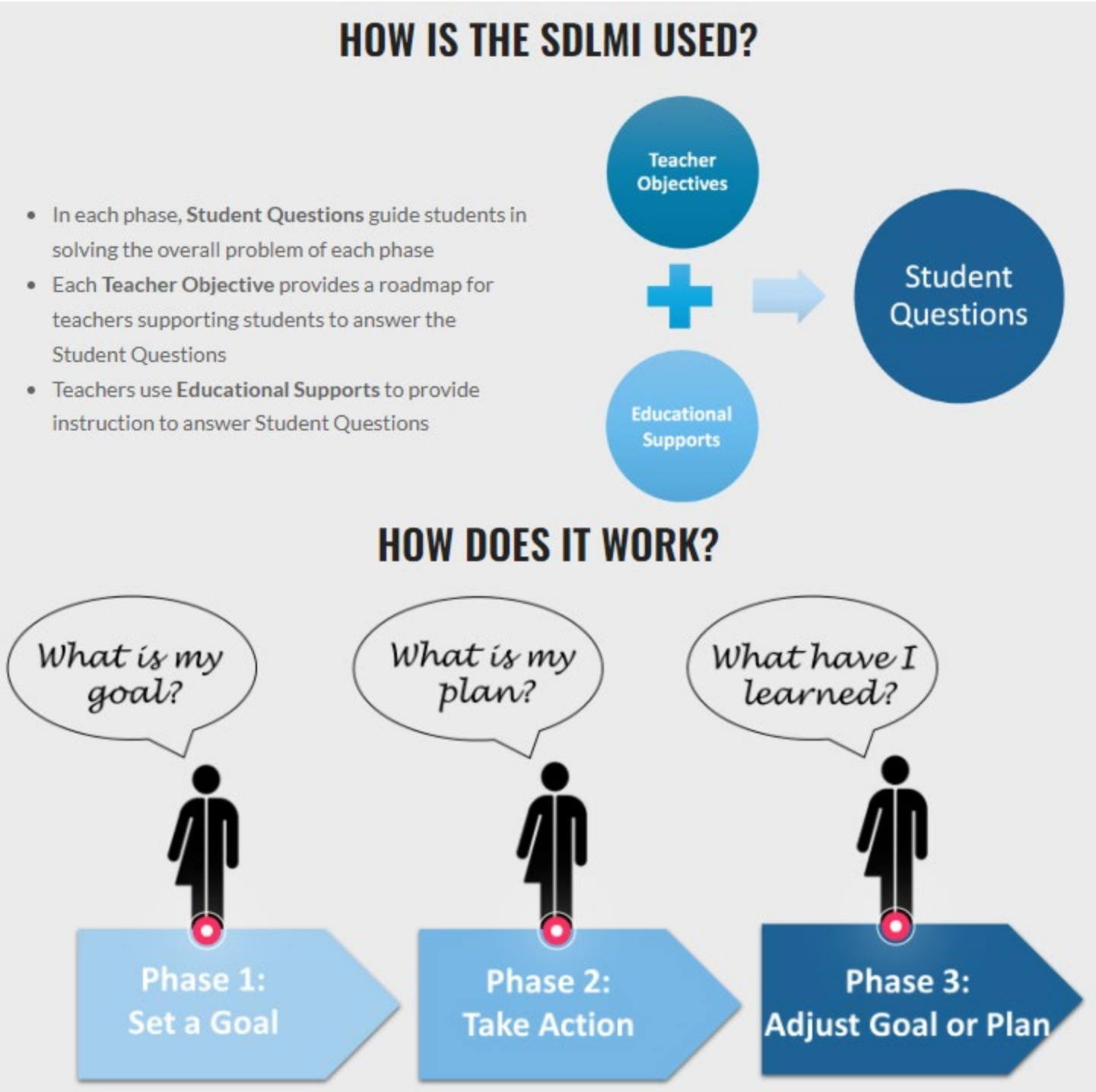
- Utilizes a personalized approach to identify individual strengths, conduct appropriate job placements, and provide long-term support services to autistic adults receiving VR services across a multitude of settings.
- Uses a job coach supporting individuals or small groups within the business setting.
- Participants receive several additional support services such as social groups, skill-based counseling sessions, and vocational training along with job coaching and employer autism training.
- Approximately 96% of participants were placed in jobs with an 89% retention rate

**It is unclear if the program has gone through a research study, and although the evaluation outcomes reported high rates of employment.*

Evidence-based practices - 3

Achieving Competitive, Customized Employment through Specialized Services Intervention https://youtu.be/gD7VBgFCWDA

- A protocol that customizes employment process within a user-friendly system that incorporates an interconnected package of tools, templates, and logs that promote consistent application of the intervention.
- Uses 6 key elements: discovery process, vocational profile, customized employment planning meeting, portfolio/visual resume, customized job development and negotiation, and accommodations and post-employment supports over the course of 8–9 months.
- Research data is limited with a small sample size and minimal outcome data available to date, additional studies are underway and initial results show promise.
- Success of the intervention was found to be greatly impacted by provider agencies and practitioners' engagement.



Evidence-based practices - 4

Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction

https://selfdetermination.ku.edu/homepage/intervention/

Supported Employment, Comprehensive Cognitive Enhancement, and Social Skills (SUCCESS)

- SUCCESS is a manualized curriculum to enhance executive functioning and memory skills (13 sessions) and social cognitive and communication skills (12 sessions) including self-determination and self-advocacy in autistic individuals within community or educational environment.
- The program specifically targets cognitions most expected in vocational soft skills, threading content from each construct into the next.
- Employment outcomes include increased job attainment and job advancements compared to control group with all working in competitive integrated employment settings.
- Implementation outcomes include high feasibility, acceptability, and satisfaction with positive qualitative statements from students, parents, teachers, and administrators about the interventions. https://intricatemindinstitute.com/success-supported-comprehensive-cognitive-enhancement-and-social-skills-tra

Evidence-Based Practices Identified

Evidence-Based Practices Identified (NCAEP)	Established Interventions Identified by NSP													
	Behavioral Interventions	Cognitive Behavioral Intervention Package	Modeling	Naturalistic Teaching Strategies	Parent Training	Peer Training Package	Pivotal Response Treatment®	Schedules	Scripting	Self-management	Social Skills Package	Story-based Intervention	Language Training (Production)	Comprehensive Behavioral Treatment for Young Children
Antecedent-Based Intervention (ABI)	✓												Language training did not emerge as a focused intervention by the NCAEP. Components of Language Training (Production) overlap with NCAEP identified practices that may support language production, such as modeling, prompting, reinforcement, visual supports, and music-mediated interventions.	The NCAEP did not review comprehensive treatment models. Components of the Comprehensive Behavioral Treatment of Young Children may overlap with many NCAEP identified practices, such as discrete trial training, modeling, prompting, time delay, and behavior momentum intervention.
Cognitive Behavioral Instructional Strategies (CBIS)		✓												
Differential Reinforcement (DR)	✓													
Discrete Trial Training (DTT)	✓													
Extinction (EXT)	✓													
Modeling (MD)	✓		✓											
Naturalistic Interventions (NI)				✓			✓							
Parent-Implemented Interventions (PII)					✓									
Peer-Based Instruction & Intervention (PBII)						✓								
Prompting (PP)	✓								✓					
Reinforcement (R)	✓													
Response Interruption & Redirection (RIR)	✓													
Self-Management (SM)										✓				
Social Narratives (SN)												✓		
Social Skills Training (SST)											✓			
Task Analysis (TA)	✓													
Time Delay (TD)	✓													
Video Modeling (VM)	✓		✓											
Visual Supports (VS)	✓							✓	✓					
Augmentative & Alternative Communication (AAC)	Identified as an emerging intervention by the NSP.													
Exercise & Movement (EXM)	Identified as an emerging intervention by the NSP.													
Functional Communication Training (FCT)	Identified as an emerging intervention by the NSP.													
Music-Mediated Interventions (MMI)	Identified as an emerging intervention by the NSP.													
Technology-aided Instruction & Intervention (TAII)	Identified as an emerging intervention by the NSP.													
Behavior Momentum Intervention (BMI)	The NSP did not consider this as a catergory for intervention.													
Direct Instruction (DI)	The NSP did not consider this as a catergory for intervention.													
Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)	The NSP did not consider this as a catergory for intervention.													
Sensory Integration® (SI)	The NSP did not consider this as a catergory for intervention.													

https://autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/node/19

Instructions

Plan for the future

Housing and residential supports

- Asking questions
  - Where does the individual want to live?
  - Do they understand the options?
  - Where would the individual thrive? Be the happiest? Feel the safest?
  - What type of setting would best to help them achieve an independent and successful future?
  - What supports do they need and what types of options best provide those supports?
  - What setting will help the individual expand upon strengths and abilities?
- Model for residential support – supported living, supervised living, group home living, group living/ownership
- What funding is available for living?

Health

- Finding the right doctor
- Mental health
- Personal hygiene
- Puberty and sexuality

Technology

- Technology can help with communication, decision-making, motivation, social networking, conducting assessments, and vocational assistance
- Can be used to make visual schedules, video modeling
- Must plan for internet safety

Social and Leisure Activities

- What interests does the student have or what activities do they like to do?
- Share ideas, hopes, and dreams for the future.
- Explicitly teach and plan time to practice skills.
- Explicitly teach self-determination skills.
  - Does the student know about their disability and how to talk about its' impact on life, school, work, etc.?
  - Do they know their triggers and sensory needs or aversions (e.g., lights, noises, smells)?

Concluding thoughts - 1

- **Every individual with autism is different**, so each will require different supports and services throughout the transition process.
- It is so **important to start early**, evaluate the student's likes and dislikes, strengths and challenges, and make a plan to help create as independent and enjoyable of a life as possible.
- Remember to **involve the student in the journey to adulthood**. In order to one day live an independent life, an individual with autism must have as much of a say as possible in decisions made regarding their future.

Concluding thoughts - 2

- It is critical to **teach young adults with autism how to advocate** for themselves and ensure that they know how to get **not just the services they might need, but the services they want as well**.
- **Start teaching independent living skills at a young age and gradually build upon them.** These skills may take time for a student to learn, but continue to motivate and support them until important life skills like hygiene are learned and understood. Don’t be afraid to start small.
- This process will take time, but if you start early and take the right steps, as a team you will be able to help successfully lay the foundation for the future of this great person with autism.

Resources

- Kohler, P. D., Gothberg, J. E., Fowler, C., and Coyle, J. (2016). Taxonomy for transition programming 2.0: A model for planning, organizing, and evaluating transition education, services, and programs. Western Michigan University. Available at www.transitionta.org.

- Baker-Ericzén MJ, ElShamy R, Kammes RR. Current Status of Evidence-Based Practices to Enhance Employment Outcomes for Transition Age Youth and Adults on the Autism Spectrum. Curr Psychiatry Rep. 2022 Mar;24(3):161-170. doi: 10.1007/s11920-022-01327-2. Epub 2022 Feb 22. PMID: 35192114.WebAIM's PowerPoint Accessibility

- Autism Speaks Transition Toolkit https://www.autismspeaks.org/tool-kit/transition-tool-kit

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