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1963 - 2023

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SAVANNAH

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MONDAY, MAY 22 - FRIDAY, MAY 26, 2023

Different, Not Less –

Supporting Child Support Customers & Employers with Neuro-diversity



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Our Panel

Kate Hooven, MS – ASERT Collaboration - Justice Project Coordinator

James Gallagher – Philadelphia Family Court Domestic Relations Section - Director

Kelly Carothers – Adams Co. Domestic Relations Section – Executive Director

Charles Carothers – Cumberland Co. Domestic Relations Section – Assistant Director

Melissa Hayes – Schuylkill Co. Domestic Relations Section – Deputy Director



Neuro-diversity, including autism and other neurological differences is being diagnosed in increasing numbers. As children with neuro-diversities age into adulthood, more than ½ remain unemployed and many will become customers of the child support program.

In this session, we will explore understanding and accommodating autism and other neuro-diversities in the child support program as employers and as customers and will include characteristics of individuals with neuro-diversity, agency training, accommodations in court settings and opportunities for employment.



Agenda for today's session:

- ❖ ASERT Collaboration
- ❖ Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
- ❖ Our Panelist Stories
- ❖ Question and Answers



AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER



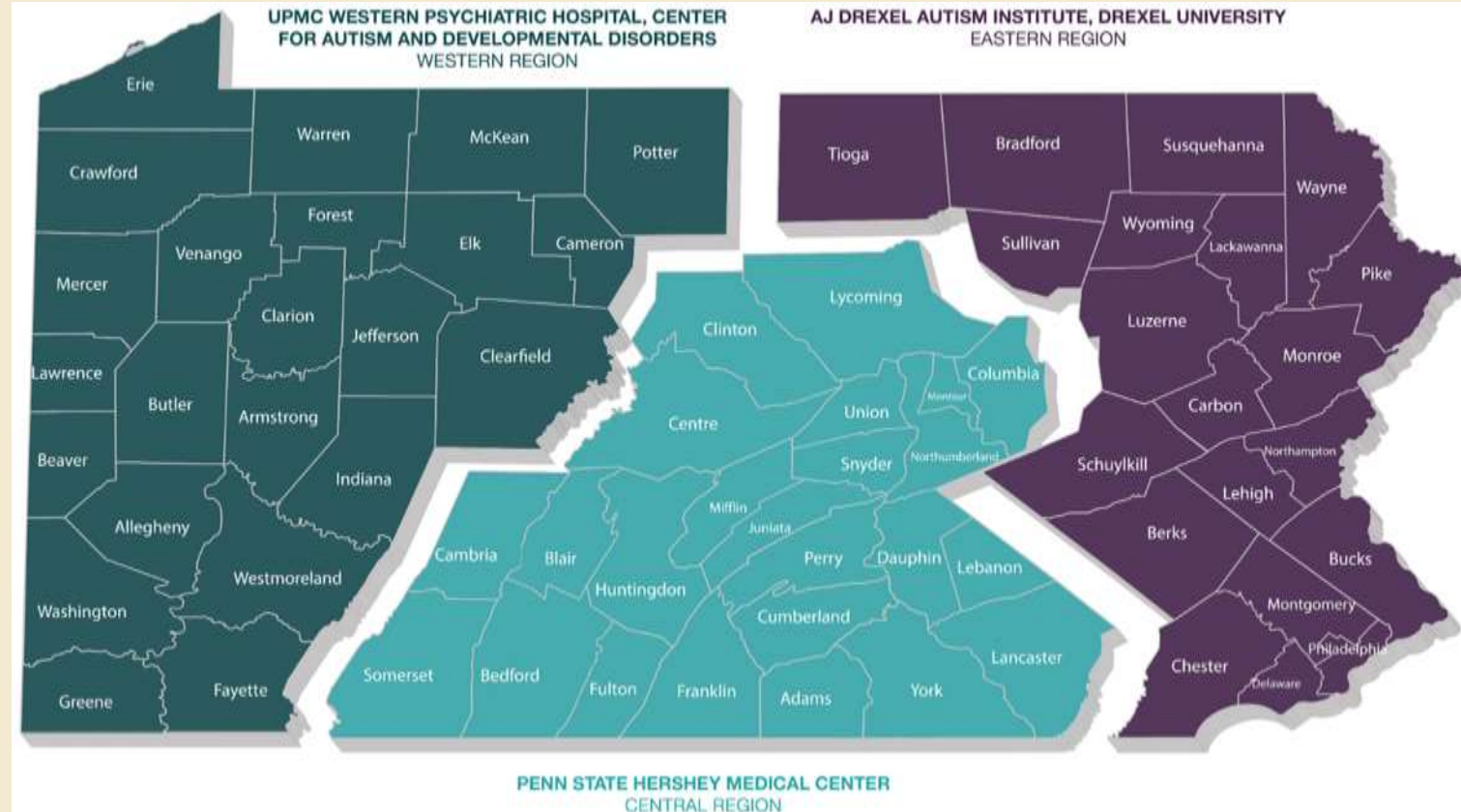
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What is ASERT?

Autism
Services
Education
Resources
and
Training



What does ASERT do?



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Characteristics

- Autism has **no physical characteristics**
- Autism is a **complex, spectrum disorder**



Language

Speak
clearly and
concisely

Speak in a
calm, quiet
voice

One
command
at a time

No slang or
abstract
language

Give them
time to
respond

Ask if they
understand

One person
talks at a
time

Repeat or
rephrase



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RESTRICTED OR REPETITIVE BEHAVIOR

Repetitive
movements

Intense focus
and interests

Need for routine
or structure

Attached to
unusual objects
or part of
objects



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SENSORY SENSITIVITIES & SUPPORTS

Sensory Sensitivities

- Temperature
- Lighting
- Noise levels
- Physical boundaries
- Scents or odors
- High tolerance for pain



Tools & Supports

- Visual schedules
- First- then boards
- Sensory objects or fidget toys
- Avoid quick movements and loud noises
- Do not touch, unless absolutely necessary



SIGNS OF POSSIBLE OVERSTIMULATION

Flapping

Rocking

Pacing

Scripting

Loud
Verbalizations

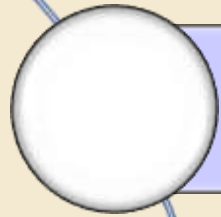


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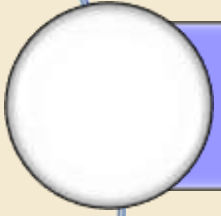


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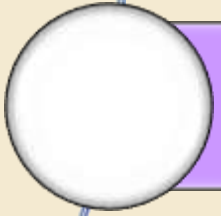
OVERSTIMULATION CAN LEAD TO...



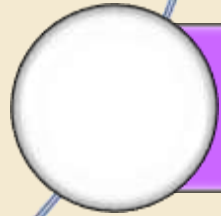
Tantrums/Meltdowns (e.g. yelling, flapping)



Eloping (running away)



Self Injurious Behavior (biting self, hitting head)



Aggression



EMPLOYMENT CHALLENGES

Missing Social
Cues

Communication

Executive
Functioning
Deficits

Social
Awareness



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EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING: ORGANIZING FUNCTIONS

Planning

- Double booking appointments
- Difficulty with multiple step tasks
- Difficulty prioritizing
- Assess your own needs
- Come up with options
- Make a sequenced plan

Problem Solving

- Difficulty coming up with a Plan B
- Frustrated when Plan A doesn't work
- Come up with a Plan B ahead of time
- Practice Plan B



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EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING: ORGANIZING FUNCTIONS (CONTINUED)

Shifting / Flexibility

- Difficulty switching to task that needs completed immediately
- Difficulty getting to work because bus or route is delayed
- Can change based on responses to environment
- Keep sensory needs in mind

Attention

- Difficulty completing a task due to interruptions or distractions
- Difficulty being on time due to inability to estimate the time it takes
- Come up with Plan B ahead of time
- Practice Plan B



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EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING: ORGANIZING FUNCTIONS (CONTINUED)

Working Memory

- Difficulty dialing phone number as someone reads it
- Difficulty following multiple-step directions
- One task at a time
- Using visuals when possible



EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING: REGULATION FUNCTIONS

Inhibition

- Talking about a topic even when asked to stop
- Gentle reminders that a topic has changed

Self-monitoring

- Difficulty completing a task when in a different environment.
- Difficulty driving (awareness of speed, the location of the car to others, etc.)
- Remind of coping skills used at home



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EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING: REGULATION FUNCTIONS (CONTINUED)

Initiation

- Procrastination of non-preferred task
- May be unaware of how to break down a project into steps or not knowing how to begin
- Break tasks down into steps
- Provide visuals if possible



PA AUTISM NEEDS ASSESSMENT: JOB SEARCH



65% Resume Creation

82% Finding Employment Opportunities

42% Filling out Applications

71% Getting an Interview

62% Interviewing

61% Following up after an Interview



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STRATEGIES FOR JOB INTERVIEWS



Practice and Role Play



Dress for success



Suggest Other Ways to Prepare



If they are comfortable doing so, practice eye contact and a handshake



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STRATEGIES FOR WORKPLACE SUCCESS



Prepare both the employer and the employee



Provide on the job support if necessary



Visual supports



Clearly defined work tasks and duties



Well suited job placement



Modifications and accommodations to the workplace



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Discuss and Practice Coping Strategies

Suggest use of
calming strategies
such as fidgets

Model positive
behavior and
provide praise

Provide time to
adjust before
trying new strategy

Offer breaks

Teach and
reinforce flexibility



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Goal Setting

- Involve the individual in the goal-setting process
- Ensure the goal is achievable
- Focus on one new habit at a time
- Always provide encouragement and praise
- Reinforce the effort made, not the accuracy of the behavior
- Encourage sharing of success with others



What can YOU do now as the Employer?

1. Test out the strategies you decide upon. Make note of which methods work best for the individual and utilize these when planning for big changes.
2. New situations are not always predictable. Prepare yourself and the person you support by practicing coping strategies together and learn which strategies work for the person you're supporting. Remember, what works for you may not necessarily work for the person you're supporting.



Treat Everyone With Respect

Know the people
you support
beyond their
resume

Discuss preferred
language re
autism

Take into account
communication
style

Always honor an
individual's right to
privacy

Provide
opportunities for
independent
decision making



Final Tips

Build Trust:

- Sensory needs
- Communication needs
- Use what you learn to support them

Assess how you speak to your autistic employees:

- Do you presume competence?
- Do you talk age appropriately?



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Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)



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VR's Services

Who should apply for VR services?

- ❖ An individual with a disability
- ❖ An individual who wants to work

Who is eligible for VR services?

- ❖ A disability which causes a substantial impediment to preparing for, obtaining, or maintaining employment
- ❖ Able to benefit from VR services
- ❖ A need for multiple services over a period of at least 6 months or on an ongoing basis



Eligible Diagnosed Conditions

- ❖ Alcoholism
- ❖ Amputation
- ❖ Attention Deficit Disorder
- ❖ Autism Spectrum
- ❖ Brain Injuries
- ❖ Cancer
- ❖ Chronic Fatigue Syndrome
- ❖ Circulatory System Disorders
- ❖ Cognitive Disabilities
- ❖ Developmental Disabilities
- ❖ Diabetes
- ❖ Drug Addiction
- ❖ Epilepsy
- ❖ Fibromyalgia
- ❖ Hearing Loss
- ❖ Heart Disease
- ❖ Intellectual Disabilities
- ❖ Learning Disabilities
- ❖ Mental Health
- ❖ Muscular Disease
- ❖ Neurological & Seizure Disorders
- ❖ Respiratory Disease
- ❖ Skeletal & Joint Disease
- ❖ Speech Impairment
- ❖ Visual Impairments
- ❖ Spinal Cord Injury



Examples of VR's Services

Diagnostic Services

Medical, psychological, and audiological exams and tests used to better understand an individual's disability and needs for specific types of services

Vocational Evaluation

Testing such as aptitude, interest, general ability, academic, work tolerance and "hands-on" job experience used to understand an individual's vocational potential

Counseling & Guidance

Ongoing interaction with a credentialed Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor to assist individuals with disabilities better understand their vocational potential, set realistic vocational goals, adjust goals as necessary, develop successful work habits, and begin a satisfying career



Examples of VR's Services

Training

Education to prepare an individual for employment including, but not limited to, basic academic, vocational/technical, college, on-the-job, independent living skills, and personal and work adjustment training

Assistive Technology

Evaluation services to determine adaptive computer, cognitive technology and mobility devices, as well as devices for visual and auditory impairments

Restoration Services

Medical services and equipment such as physical and occupational therapy, wheelchairs, and other types of rehabilitation technology to enable an individual to pursue career goals and achieve independence



Examples of VR's Services

Support Services

Occupational tools, license or equipment; Home modifications, adaptive/special household equipment related to obtaining/maintaining employment; Van or car modification, including special driving or lifting devices to enable you to travel to your job; Personal care assistance; Independent living training

Placement Services

Vocational counseling, job seeking-assistance, job clubs, job development, Resume assistance, interviewing skills, etc., designed to increase preparation to apply for jobs, interact with employers, obtain/maintain employment

Employer Services

Community outreach to partner with employers regarding hiring individuals with disabilities; Financial incentives including tax credits and wage reimbursement; Assistance with job site modifications



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Companies
that Get It!



Our Panelist Stories



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Questions and Answers



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We live in a diverse universe, and we need to accept and celebrate the diversity of every person we meet.

