

Career Planning Experiences of College Students with ASD

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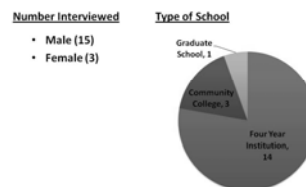
Background of Study

- National Institute on Disability Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) focused on identifying effective components of a collaborative career planning model
- Model development based on input from college students with ASD, vocational rehabilitation counselors, disability support services staff, and college career center counselors

Focus of Webcast

- Today's discussion focuses on experiences of 18 college students with ASD.
- Structured interview process used to gather information from students on:
 - current planning and preparation activities
 - use of campus services and supports
 - student satisfaction with these services

Participant Results: Demographics



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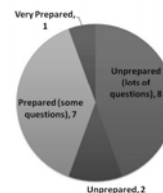
Campus Services: Career Center



Source of Information Concerning Careers



Level of Preparation to Enter Workforce in Career Area

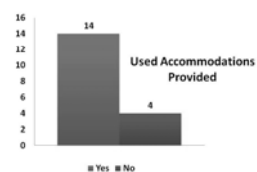


Career Information Needed

Career Information Needed	# of Responses
Informational interviews	14
Career exploration	14
Internships	13
Work experience	12
Job shadow/mentor	12
Disclosure plan for employer	12
Resume development	11
How to search for jobs	10

Campus Services: DSS

Registered with Disability Support Services Office: N=18



Campus Services: DSS

Most Frequent Accommodations Used:

Accommodation	# of Responses
Extended time on tests	14
Alternative testing room	12
Priority Registration	6
Record lectures	5
Note takers	3
Books on CD	3
Adjustments in classroom seating, lighting or breaks	3
Housing accommodation	2

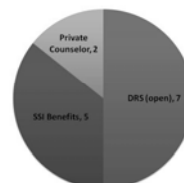
Campus Services: Other



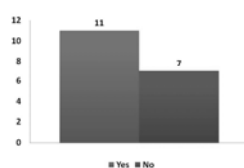
Academic Services Needed

Academic Service	# of Responses
Manage my stress	13
Manage my time	12
Talk with my professors	12
Organizational skills	10
Decide what accommodations to request	9
Locate helpful technology	8

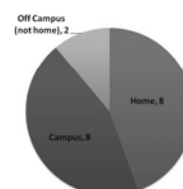
Community Resources



Non Academic Areas: Involvement on Campus



Non Academic Areas: Living Arrangements



Non Academic Information Needed

Information Needed	# of Responses
Solving problems	13
Learning about my disability	9
Making decisions	8
Setting goals	8

Emerging Themes: Choosing a Major

- Family members play critical role in providing information and guidance on career choices
- Half of the participants based career selection on areas they excelled in or areas of strong interest
- Exposure to career areas was limited and not obtained through related work or volunteer experiences

Emerging Themes: Limited Use of College Career Centers

- Lack awareness of what career centers offer; therefore do not make informed decisions about whether to use
- The use of career centers requires initiation on the part of the student to visit, to schedule an individual appointment with a career counselor, or to independently explore the wealth of resources.
- Limited use of career centers - obtained general information in spite of expressed need for interview skills, job search strategies and resume development.

Emerging Themes: Accommodation Use

- All participants registered with the Disability Support Services office on their campus
- Academic accommodations were ones traditionally provided by the DSS office
- Extended time on tests and alternate testing room were perceived as the most effective to getting good grades

Emerging Themes: What Postsecondary Faculty & Staff Should Know About ASD

- Perceive ASD more positively; does not need a cure
- Recognize difficulties in social situations; students not being intentionally rude
- We need things explained in more detail and with advance notice
- Flickering lights are really difficult for some of us

Emerging Themes: Personal Management Skills

- Solving problems is a challenge, such as who to go to with questions or figuring out college processes (i.e., financial aid, getting DSS documentation)
- Parents play a significant role in connecting students with services and advocate on behalf
- Want better skills for meeting deadlines and managing stress

Emerging Themes: Peer Relationships

- Free time activities often include computer games, watching movies, writing, or surfing the computer
- Some attempts at campus participation include disappointments or struggle to fit in
- Range from some students spend too much time with friends; others feel extremely isolated
- Others focus on learning social skills through counseling

Emerging Themes: Improving College Experiences

- Having access to relevant work experience and internship opportunities
- Being more prepared (i.e., note taking, organization skills, money management)
- Have more course selections and less group work
- Students want to learn information through small group or 1:1 interactions, not via the web

Recommendations

- Support students in understanding ASD and the expectations of college
- Obtain more on site work experiences during college
- Provide training to college personnel on effective communication and instructional strategies
- Collaborate among service providers to explore expanded supports such as 1:1 coaching to learn college processes or mentors at the work place