Adulthood in autism: Applying theoretical models to the development of successful employment programmes

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Children with ASD grow into adults...





Adults with ASD

- Training:
 - 50-60% of young adults with ASD leave the education system without qualifications
 - Only a minority go to university
- Independence
 - 50%-60% do not live on their own
 - Financial dependence from family or government
- Relationships
 - Only 5-10% have a stable partner

Levy & Taylor (2009)





Employment

- 85% of people with ASD are unemployed (NAS)
- Difficulty to hold jobs, switch jobs often and difficulties adjusting to job settings (Howlin, 2000; Hurbultt & Chalmers, 2009)

	High functioning	Low functioning
No activity	23%	8%
Day centres	-	76%
Employed	23%	16%
Higher education	47%	

Taylor & Seltzer (2011)





Mental health

	High functioning	Low functioning
Anxiety disorders	25% OCD (Russell et al., 2005)	12% (Moseley et al., 2011)
uisoruers	50% (Lugnegård, et al., 2011)	42% (Bradley et al., 2004)
Mood	37%-53%	43% Depression
disorders	(Ghaziuddin et al., 1998)	(Sterling & Dawson, 2008)
	50% Depression (Lugnegård,et al, 2011)	50% Depression (Bradley et al., 2004)





Life cycle

Lack of qualifications

Unemployment

Lack of independence

Mental health difficulties





Cost of autism

	Prevalence	Cost
Adults	432,750	£25 billions
Children	107,016	£2.7 billions
Total	539,766	£27.5 billions
		ad from Knapp at al (2000)







Cost breakdown

		Low functioning	High functioning
Accommodation		36,233	
Hospitals		4,588	14,004
Education		2,886	2,886
Employment support		253	0
Family expenses		762	1,494
Lost employment (careers/parents)		1,298	2,910
Lost employment (adults with ASC)		22,383	19,785
	Total	75,919	44,230





Adult Autism Strategy (2010;2014)

- Increasing awareness and understanding of autism
- Developing a clear and consistent pathway for diagnosis
- Improving access to the services and support people need to live independently within the community
- Support people with autism into employment
- Enabling local partners to develop relevant services to meet identified needs and priorities





Barriers to employment

Collaboration with Autism Research, Policy and Practice Hub (Autism RRP; Wales Autism Research Group))

- To investigate practitioners' views on the implementation of the Adult Autism Strategy (2010) regarding training and employment targets
- 2. To identify the barriers people with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) encounter on the road to successful employment





Survey

- Demographic characteristics: Age, gender, diagnosis, sources of social support and type of education.
- Employment history
 - How many paid jobs have you had in the past? Are you currently in paid employment?
 - If you have changed jobs, what are the main reasons for deciding to leave a job?
 - What helped you find a job?
 - What support have you had at your current job?
 - Which of the following adjustments have been made for you at your work place?
- Volunteering history





Respondents

		ASD n=47	Carers 16-18 Yrs n=10	Carers 19+ years n=27
Age	Mean	39.7	17.2	25.07
	Standard deviation	13.1	0.92	11.44
Diagnosis	Asperger Syndrome	35	5	17
	High-Functioning ASD	8	2	7
	ASD	2	-	1
	Low-functioning ASD	-	3	2
Comorbidity	Developmental Disorder	12	1	6
	Mental Health	4	1	2
	Combination of above	4	3	2
Schooling	Mainstream	40	3	15
	Special Need school	5	4	7
	Other	1	3 Practition	5 ners (n=43)





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Work experience

		ASD	Carers 19+
Ever been in employment	Yes	93.5% (n=43)	59.2% (n=16)
	No	6.5% (n=3)	40.8% (n=11)
Average stay in a job	< 1 year	40.5% (n=15)	50% (n=6)
	1 year +	59.5% (n=22)	50% (n=6)
Support in finding employment	Family /Friends	22.9% (n=8)	60% (n=3)
	Professional help	25.7% (n=9)	40% (n=2)
	No help	51.4% (n=18)	-
Support in the work place	Understanding employer	40% (n=14)	62.5% (n=5)
	Mentor	31.4% (n=11)	25% (n=2)
	Employment programme	14.3% (n=5)	12.5 (n=1)
	No support	14.3% (n=5)	-
Adjustments in the workplace	Yes	61.5% (n=16)	60% (n=3)
	No	38.5% (n=10)	40% (n=2)





Barriers to employment

	Practitioners (n=43*)	Carers (n=28*)	Adults with ASD (n=28*)
External barriers			
Services	11.6% (n=5)	7.1% (n=2)	-
Application and interview process	18.6% (n=8)	7.1% (n=2)	-
Employer and staff lack of understanding	20.9% (n=9)	39.3% (n=11)	35.7% (n=10)
Failure to make adjustments	16.3% (n=7)	14.3% (n=4)	42.8% (n=12)
Other	7% (n=3)	-	21.5% (n=6)
Internal barriers			
Condition related	18.6% (n=8)	7.1% (n=2)	-
Confidence	7% (n=3)	10.7% (n=3)	-
Lack of coping strategies	-	14.3% (n=4)	-





Summary

- <u>Lack of understanding from employers and staff</u>:
 Carers and adults with ASD identify this as one of the main barriers to employment (39.3% carers and 35.7% adults with ASC).
- <u>Failure to make adjustments in the workplace</u>: 40% of carers and 38.5% of adults with ASC
- Other key issues identified:
 - Need of increased awareness not only in the public sector but across all sectors (50% of respondents)
 - Need to create <u>work experience</u> and apprenticeship opportunities (12.5% of respondents)





NICE guidelines

- Employment programmes are highly effective (Howlin et al, 2005; Mavranezouli et al, 2013) but costly (NAS)
- Recommendations for supported employment programmes:
 - Employability skills
 - Careful matching the person to the job
 - Support for the employer and employee
 - Advice on making reasonable adjustments





ASD profile

- ASD is characterised by:
 - Social and communication impairments (Dawson et al, 2004; Charman et al, 1997).
 - Executive function difficulties (i.e., planning difficulties;
 Hill, 2004)
 - Unusual sensory profiles (Kargas et al, 2014; Ben-Sasson et al, 2009)
- High variability in symptoms (Valla & Belmonte, 2013; Kargas et al, 2014)
- Individual employment programmes?











ACE

- Funding from Autism Innovation Fund (Dept of Health)
- Collaboration between university of Portsmouth, four local authorities (SHIP) and Autism Hampshire
- Aimed at high-functioning adults with ASD
- Develop assessment tools to assess individual employment profiles in order to:
 - Facilitate job-person matching
 - Provide person-centred training to employers
 - Support decisions of adjustment needs
- Provide work placements





Stage 1

• Online assessment

In-depth follow-up interview

Stage 2

Job person matching

• Training: Intervention vs. control

Stage 3

Work placements

Supported by mentors

Stage 4

- Evaluation of intervention
- Revision of tools





Stage 1: Individual assessments

- Core difficulties in autism
 - Executive functioning (i.e., flexibility and planning; Hill, 2004)
 - Sensory sensitivities (Ben-Sasson et al, 2009)
 - Social and communication skills Dawson et al, 2004)
- Adaptation of existing scales to work settings
 - Executive function: I have trouble with tasks that have more than one step (BRIEF-er)
 - Sensory sensitivities: I cannot work in rooms with fluorescent lights
 - Social and communication: I have difficulty making and receiving telephone calls





Stage 1: Individual assessments

- Occupational typology (Holland, 1985):
 - RIASEC: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising and Conventional
- Employability skills:
 - Creative (A), numerical (I), practical (R), problem solving
 (C), social and interpersonal(S), influencing (E), verbal communication, organising, written communication
- Online questionnaires followed up by in-depth interview (face-to-face, phone or skype)





Stage2: Job-matching

- Individual Employment profile: Summary of findings with recommendations
- Individual employment profile report will be given to the person with ASD to identify areas of strength and areas in need of further support
- Individual profiles used to match people with ASD to available work opportunities





Stage 2: Training/intervention

- Matching only group (n=10):
 - The individual profiles of the people with ASD assigned to this group will be used to match them to one of the work placements opportunities.
 - The employers in this group will attend the generic training event held at Portsmouth University about ASD.
- Matching and adjustment group (n=10):
 - The individual profiles of the people with ASD assigned to this group will be used to match them to one of the work placements opportunities.
 - The employers in this group will attend the generic training event. In addition, we will hold an individual session with each employer to inform them about the individual profile of the person with ASD and provide them with recommendations about minor adjustments needs.





Stage 3: Work placements

• 8 week placement: Part time, paid or unpaid

 Both employers and employees supported by trained mentors (average 6 hours a week)

 Weekly feedback sessions with employers and employees





Stage 4: Evaluation of intervention

Employers and work colleagues:

- Quality of working life (QoWL; Easton & Van Laar, 2014),
 Positive and negative affect (PANAS-X; Watson & Clark, 1994),
 Self-Esteem (Rosenberg, 1965)
- Attitudes towards employees with ASD, autism awareness, expectations of the scheme (at start of the project only), likelihood of hiring a person with ASD in the future and feedback on the work scheme to include benefits and limitations.

Adults with ASD:

- Positive and negative affect (PANAS-X; Watson & Clark, 1994),
 Self-Esteem (Rosenberg, 1965) and Quality of Working Life (QoWL; Easton & Van Laar, 2014) at end of project
- Expectations from the work scheme, confidence in own abilities and on gaining employment, intention to gain permanent employment, absent days, hours of work, pay and feedback on the work scheme to include benefits and limitations.





Weekly feedback

- Problems arising and successes: Triggers, factors, emotion (e.g. confidence, anxiety levels)
- These data will inform areas in need of improvement of the assessment scales and training
- Data will also contribute to the development of database of recommendations made to employers for an online version





Outcomes

 Individual assessment tools for jobperson matching and career development

 Report with recommendations of minor adjustments to employers based on individual assessments

 Follow-up project: Online-based assessment





Autism Research Network



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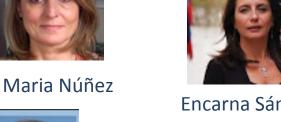


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