

Transition Issues for Families: Planning for and Coping with the Challenges of Transitioning to Adulthood

Lynda Geller, Ph.D.
Founder
Spectrum Services

The Context

- Appropriate educational interventions and other treatments have resulted in increased numbers of classified students going to college
- The transition to adulthood represents one of the most significant challenges to these individuals
- Many high school programs fail to understand the full range of mandated supports that should be included in an effective transition plan for any classified student

Asperger's Syndrome and Related Disorders

Core Characteristics DSM-IV

- Qualitative impairment in social interaction
- Restricted or repetitive and stereotyped patterns of behavior, interests, and activities.
- Clinically significant impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of function.
- No clinically significant delay in language acquisition or cognitive development

Associated Characteristics

- Problems with sensory sensitivities and processing
- Hypo and hypersensitivities
- Tactile, vestibular, proprioceptive, visual, auditory, gustatory, olfactory
- Sensation seeking and sensation avoiding

Associated Characteristics

Problems with sensory sensitivities and processing

Hypo and hypersensitivities

tactile, vestibular, proprioceptive, visual, auditory, gustatory, olfactory

sensation seeking and sensation avoiding

Associated Characteristics

Processing Issues

- Registration
- Orientation
- Interpretation
- Organization
- Execution

Self-Regulation Problems

- Attention
- Activity
- Arousal-Alertness
- Affect

Cognitive Differences

- High levels of cognitive variability
- Splinter skills
- Psycholinguistic differences
 - Problems with abstract versus literal meaning and comprehension in general
 - Misperceiving social language
- Executive function difficulties

Theory of Mind

...the ability to recognize and understand thoughts, beliefs, desires and intentions of other people in order to make sense of their behavior and predict what they are going to do next

Consequences: being literal, being misunderstood as rude, misunderstanding honesty and deception, developing distrust or paranoia, having inadequate knowledge to problem solve, being at a loss in conflict, unanticipated embarrassment, anxiety

Central Coherence

- ...being able to generalize from component parts, details, examples, etc. to a larger meaning
- ...being able to process simultaneously and find a overarching meaning
- ...being able to summarize information or remember it through an organized mental framework

Executive Functions

- The interface between the individual and the social and physical world within which he or she interacts (Bernstein & Waber, 2007)
- Executive function refers to a wide range of abilities including planning, organization, goal selection, flexibility, self regulation, inhibition, and set maintenance. They are called executive functions because they represent the organization and control mechanisms of the person. These cognitive processes are thought to be mediated by the frontal lobes.

Important Executive Functions

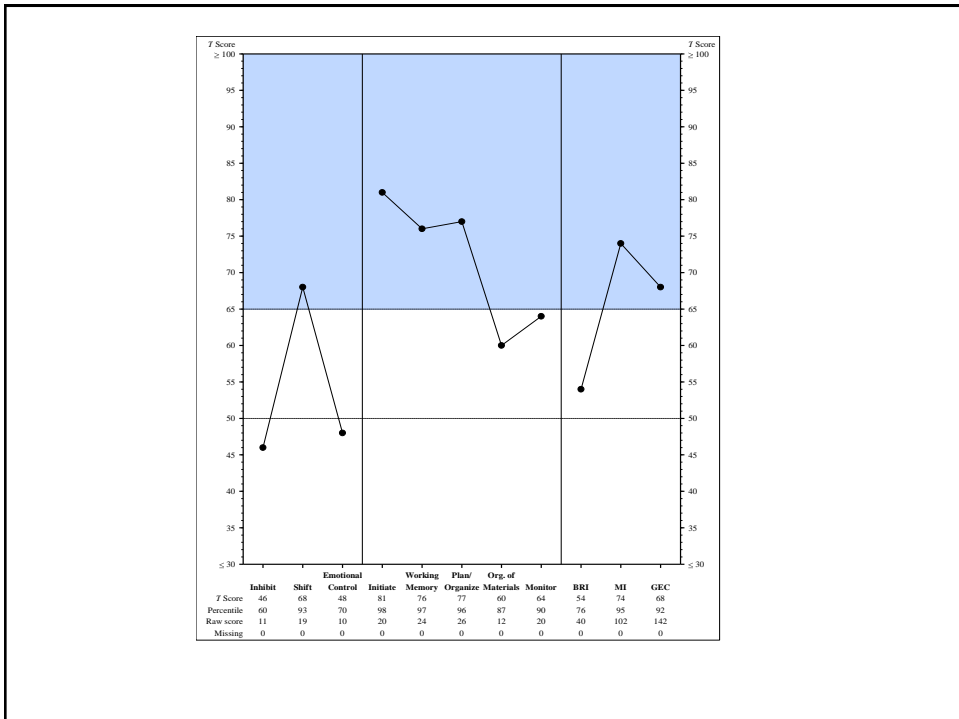
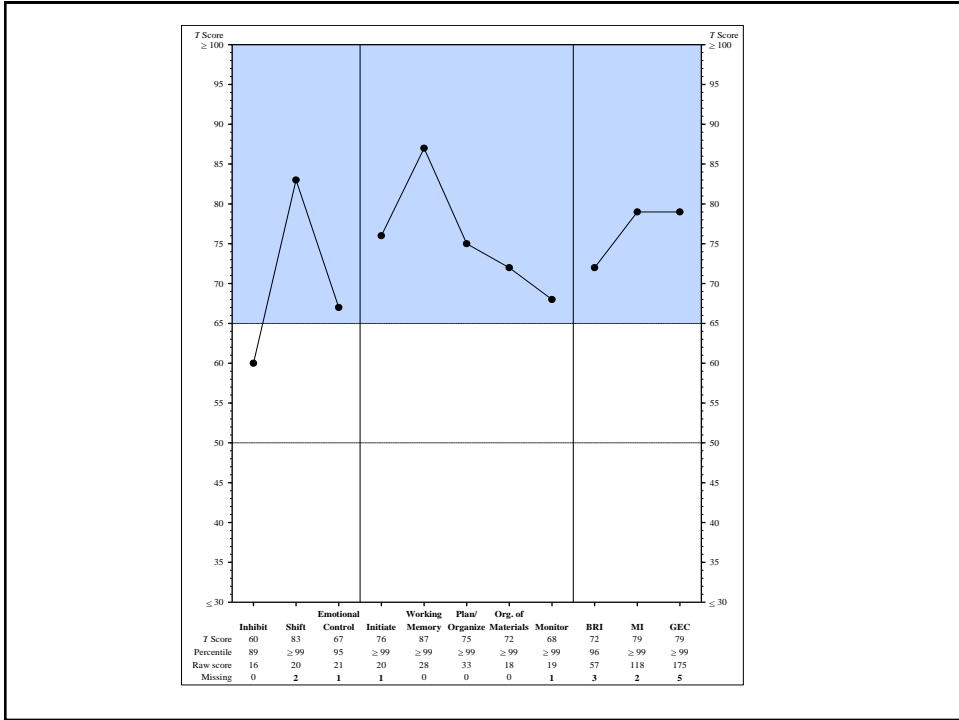
- Inhibition
- Working memory
- Emotional control
- Initiation
- Planning and organization
- Organizing materials
- Shifting
- Task monitoring

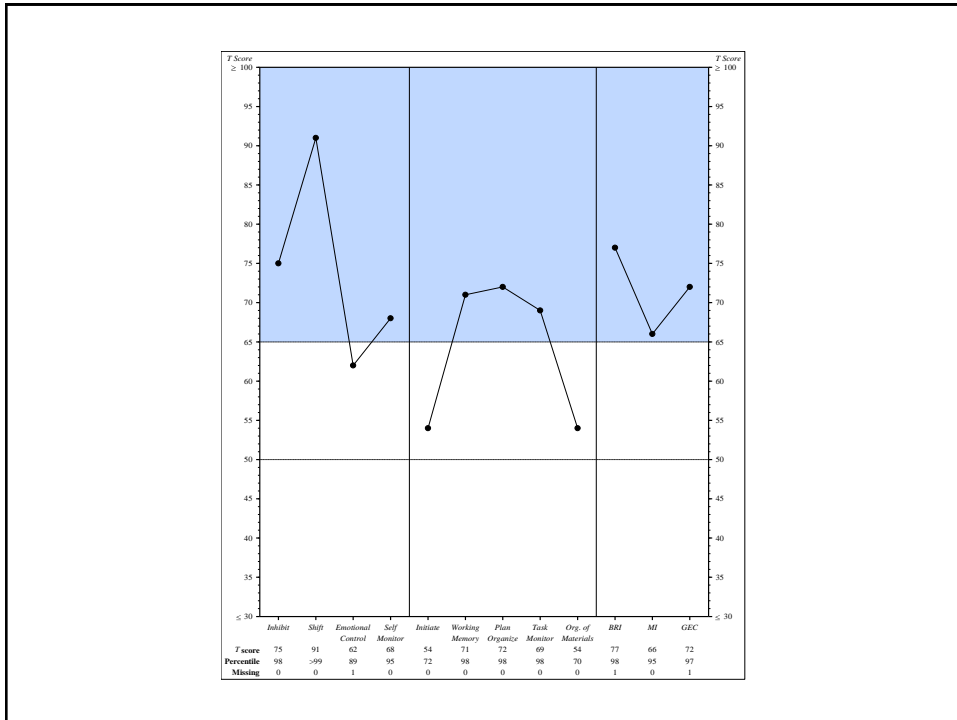
(Isquith et al., 1996)

Important Executive Functions

- Inhibition
- Working memory
- Emotional regulation
- Initiation
- Planning and organization
- Organizing materials
- Shifting
- Task monitoring
- Sustained attention
- Prioritizing
- Persistence
- Metacognition
- Sequencing
- Decision making
- Judgment

(Isquith et al., 1996)





What do executive function problems look like in academics?

Initiation

- Needs to be reminded to start assigned work
- After finishing work can't seem to direct self or get going on something else
- Needs to be reminded to start even on common tasks well within ability
- Waits for others to begin

What do executive function problems look like in academics?

Organization

- Messy backpack, desk, binder
- Can't find completed work
- Disorganized writing
- Avoids or writes very short responses even when more is known
- Loses belongings

What do executive function problems look like in academics?

Sustained attention

- Easily distracted by everything
- Fails to complete work
- Flits from task to task without completing
- Difficulty attending to lectures
- Stops in the middle of work, even when there is plenty of time to finish

What do executive function problems look like in academics?

Planning and prioritization

- Difficulty carrying out projects with multiple steps
- Difficulty being a useful member of a project group
- Can't take useful notes requiring synthesis of information
- Little understanding of doing the most important things first

What do executive function problems look like in academics?

Time management

- Poor concept of how long something will take
- Misses due dates for assignments or fails to complete assignments in assigned time
- Difficulty fitting the unexpected into schedule without disrupting everything else
- Gets lost in activities that take others little time

What do executive function problems look like in academics?

Shifting

- Overly upset by the unexpected or routine changes
- Gets stuck on one approach to a problem and can't think of any others
- Poor at open-ended questions or tasks
- Very rule-bound

Shifting and Flexibility

RED

GREEN

BLUE

BLACK

YELLOW

ORANGE

What do executive function problems look like in the classroom?

Persistence

- Gives up very easily on things within abilities
- Gets upset or abandons effort if work requires a second effort
- Doesn't understand that avoidance makes a task take even longer
- Difficulty keeping effort, even on liked tasks

What do executive function problems look like in the classroom?

Metacognition

- Overly dependent on direction from others
- Doesn't like problem solving
- Oblivious to others' thoughts about his behavior
- Avoids work or activities that require problem solving

What do executive function problems look like in academics?

Working memory

- Can't remember multiple step directions
- Can't keep information in short term memory for immediate use
- Forgets what he's doing in the middle
- Difficulty staying on topic when speaking

Working Memory

2mh9

4k51z9rk

j59v38ka4pr

What do executive function problems look like in academics?

Emotional regulation

- Overreaction to small disappointments or changes
- Anxious in response to typical demands and activities
- Over-expressions of happiness or sadness
- Emotional expressions that are very immature

What do executive function problems look like in academics?

Self-monitoring

- Poor self awareness
- Seems to see things egocentrically for age
- Can't make changes in behavior according to situation
- Retreats to routines of habitual behavioral styles

How Does Executive Function Affect Specific Academic Skills?

Reading comprehension

- Shifting and flexibility
- Organization
- Planning/prioritization

How Does Executive Function Affect Specific Academic Skills?

Writing

- Planning and organizing
- Sustained attention
- Shifting and flexibility
- Organizing and prioritization

How Does Executive Function Affect Specific Academic Skills?

Independent studying and projects

- Self regulation
- Self monitoring
- Flexibility
- Time management
- Organizing materials and information
- Goal-directed persistence
- Time management

How Does Executive Function Affect Specific Academic Skills?

Test performance

- Prioritization
- Organization
- Sustained attention
- Time management
- Working memory

How Does Executive Function Affect Specific Academic Skills?

Assignments

- Working memory
- Inhibit
- Emotional control
- Sustained attention
- Organization of space and materials
- Time management
- Initiation
- Metacognition

How Does Executive Function Affect Specific Academic Skills?

Social

- Inhibition
- Emotional control
- Flexibility
- Initiation

How Does Executive Function Affect Specific Academic Skills?

Working in groups

- Inhibition
- Planning and organization
- Organizing materials
- Working memory
- Time management

What do executive function problems look like in daily life?

Initiation

- The ability to get started without assistance
- Lack of initiation may look like depression, lack of motivation, or laziness
- Involves responding to internal and external cues
- Takes a degree of mental organization to decide to begin and on what

What do executive function problems look like in daily life?

Planning, organizing, and sequencing

- Problem may be hidden because person “knows” what to do, can answer questions about how to be organized
- Cannot “ask” themselves the questions
- Cannot develop a system to organize
- Can learn sequences, but cannot generalize them to a similar problem

What do executive function problems look like in daily life?

Planning, organizing and sequencing

- Following routines and schedules
- Completing multi-step tasks
 - Cleaning
 - Making a meal
 - Shopping
 - Keeping track of mail and bills
 - Knowing to get medical care
 - Keeping track of social obligations
 - Managing money

What do executive function problems look like in daily life?

Planning, organizing and sequencing

- May have many disjointed ideas and plans and start and stop too many of them
 - Can seem like shirking instead of disorganization
- If there are initiation problems also there may seem to be no plans at all
 - But may respond to cues perfectly well

What do executive function problems look like in daily life?

Making decisions

- A purposefully made choice based upon prioritizing options in a variety of ways and choosing one over all others for reasons that have been compared and considered
- Can be compromised at any point by poor executive function

Perry, 2009

What do executive function problems look like in daily life?

Attention

- Attention is a regulatory function as it is constantly changing
 - Level
 - Scope
- Concentration is directed attention
 - Too low → distractible and impulsive
 - Too intense → perseveration on a narrow topic

What do executive function problems look like in daily life?

Emotional regulation

- Appropriate expression of emotion is mediated by judgment
- Dysregulation occurs when judgment is overwhelmed by the strength of the emotion and there is inability to marshal coping resources
- There is a feedback loop where cognitions define appropriateness and where inaccurate cognitions interact with inadequate coping mechanisms to produce dysregulation

What do executive function problems look like in daily life?

Emotional regulation

- Inflexibility or rigidity, unmediated, is a common dysregulation.
- Extreme expressions of emotion, without modulation, are often dysregulated.
- Excessive anxiety, without logical cause, is a dysregulation.

What do executive function problems look like in daily life?

Judgment, Self-Awareness, and Self-Monitoring

- Executive dysfunction characterized by problems with
 - Perceiving accurately
 - Organizing and storing logically
 - Sequencing steps toward a plan
 - Well-controlled attention
 - Prioritizing
- Self-awareness and judgment are critical to independent functioning

What do executive function problems look like in daily life?

Judgment, Self-Awareness, and Self-Monitoring

- Thousands of little judgments are made daily in common life
- Self-awareness is knowing we are making these judgments
- Metacognition is using the brain to think about the brain functioning
- Unusual processing may bring inaccurate perceptions

What do executive function problems look like in daily life?

Judgment, Self-Awareness, and Self-Monitoring

- Self-monitoring is judgment about ourselves from moment to moment, making tiny corrections to ongoing behavior
- Poor self monitoring and egocentricity looks like selfishness
- Difficulty with dividing attention or not being able to partially direct, rather than fully direct attention, negatively affects the ability to have social conversation and to make spontaneous adjustments

What do executive function problems look like in daily life?

Judgment, Self-Awareness, and Self-Monitoring

- If judgment is impaired, there may be a reliance on other qualities
 - Routines are safer than seeking novelty and misjudging
 - Avoidance of anxiety-provoking situations can be a protection against poor judgment

Dracut Case

- 19 year old student with AS, ADHD, and an anxiety disorder
- Despite excellent academic achievement in high school was unable to function even at a community college while living at home
- School district had disregarded independent evaluations that demonstrated his particular needs

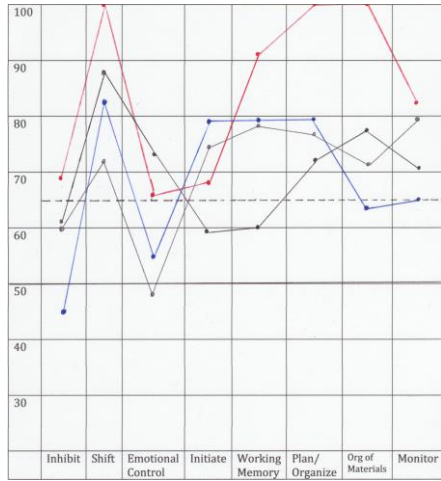
Dracut Case Findings

- Transition services are part of, and not separate from, a school district's responsibility to provide FAPE
- There should have been focus on education, employment, and independent living
- Older students must have options available such as developing skills to access community services, developing independent living skills, developing skills necessary to seek, obtain, and maintain jobs

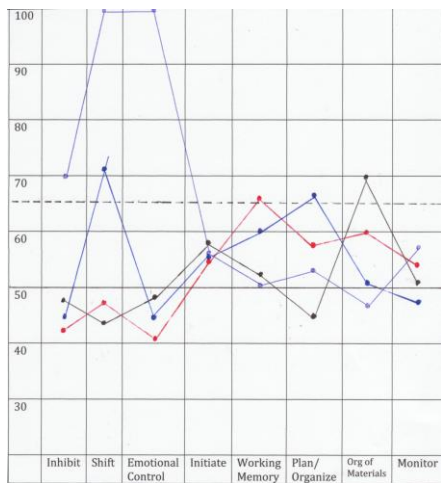
Dracut Case Findings

- Two years of compensatory services were mandated to include
 - Pragmatic language instruction
 - Organizational skills training
 - Vocational training
 - Travel instruction
 - Social skills training
- Graduated but held eligibility for two more years

Students on the Autism Spectrum



Classified Students not ASD



What makes a good transition happen? Critical elements

- Strong community commitment and involvement.
- Well structured IEP with good transition goals
- Commitment to positive outcomes
- Awareness of potential barriers
- Measurable goals
- Community experiences
- College supports and transition
- Job placements
- Travel Training Program
- Easy linkages to state services
- Entitlement assistance
- Early planning for transition

Complete Transition Planning

- Employment or Post-Secondary Education
- Residential Needs
- Financial/Entitlements
- Recreation/Leisure
- Medical
- Social/Sexual
- Transportation
- Advocacy/Legal Needs
- Person/Home/Money Management

Complete Transition Planning Employment

- Employment Planning
 - Students in Special Ed that are planning to go right to work, should be provided job placements while in school
 - Some of the placements may be in the trades, governmental, and union sectors to ensure future support systems
 - For other types of work, information should be provided to students and families for future reference and exploration

Complete Transition Planning Employment

- Job coaching should be provided for every classified student, with differing levels of supports
 - Some students may be in a job club that discusses their issues obtaining and keeping work
 - Some students may receive their job coaching services at the school in the form of individual counseling
 - Some students may need a job coach for the initial entry into work and intermittent follow up
 - Some students may need a job coach who accompanies them to the site every day and provides ongoing training and support

Levels of Assessment

- Level I
 - Survey of interests and knowledge
 - Used to develop IEP transition goals
- Level II
 - Standardized testing including specialized vocational instruments and pertinent skill assessments (BRIEF)
- Level III
 - A comprehensive career assessment that utilizes real or simulated work as the basis for evaluation

Complete Transition Planning Employment

- Level I Vocational Assessments are typically provided once, but every year would be more appropriate to monitor student and family growth toward their career understanding
- Level II Vocational Assessments should be conducted during the transition planning process
- Level III Vocational Assessments can be helpful in integrating an understanding of skills and job
- Students should be provided vocational experiences based upon the results of the assessments

Complete Transition Planning Employment

- World of Work Tours
- Internships
- Mentoring experiences
- Job placements
- Job club participation
- Department of Labor supports (paid internships)
- Travel Management Strategies

Residential

- Families need to understand the different types of living alternatives available through family relations, local community or state support
- Individuals who will NOT require state sponsored supports should be provided budgeting, residence searching training and life skills for independent living
- No Supports
- With family/friends
- Supported apartment
- State grants for supported apartment
- Group home with a training component
- Highly supervised living with a strong training component

Financial

What you need to know

- SSI benefits and the impact of working
- SSI/Medicaid and the Medicaid waiver
- Special needs trusts
- State supports for students with disabilities to attend vocational training (sometimes including college)

Recreation/Leisure Needs

- Family discussion to establish what is needed
- Survey of student interests
- Referrals for recreational and social activities
- Specialized recreation
- Religious/Service/Town related activities
- Linkage to the areas of interest
- Supported participation during senior year

Medical

- Assist in developing a medical support plan if needed
- Establish regular visitations to
 - Dentists
 - Primary care physician
 - OB/GYN
- Can the student make appointments independently and keep medications current?

Social/Sexual Needs

- Specialized counseling services regarding relationships and sexuality
- Learning how to access clubs and community activities

Transportation

- Provide an extensive program and support model that includes:
 - Specialized driver education if needed
 - Driver supports through travel management strategies, maps, map quest, GPS
 - Travel experience beginning at age 16 using public transportation
 - Arranging multiple modes of transportation including:
 - Taxis
 - Trains
 - Buses

Legal Advocacy

- Legal and special education advocates
 - To insure appropriate graduation time
 - To insure all life areas are addressed

Person/Home/Money Management

- Students should have structured experience with budgeting and banking
- Budgeting and tracking budgets should be integrated with employment supports and independent living skills

Setting Transition Goals in Each Category

- Postsecondary Education
- Career Awareness/Employment
- Self Advocacy & Self Determination
- Organization and Study Skills
- Independent/Daily Living Skills
- Community Participation

Planning for College

- College attendance is a means to an end, not an endpoint
 - Transition planning should begin in early adolescence and focus on life and career goals, not only academics
 - Transition planning should emphasize attaining independence in as many areas as possible
 - “Going to college” is not a transition plan

The Transition from Mainstream Education to College

- Transition services requirements were more specifically described in IDEA 1993.
- Transition services have improved.
- College bound classified students often have the most inadequate transition plans.
- Often, no more is done for mainstreamed classified students than for non-classified students

The Transition from Mainstream Education to College

Applying the Transition Quality Indicators

- Many school districts easily meet standards for vocationally bound students
- Classified students who are academically able with a few supports may have few of the indicators actualized in their IEP
- School, parents, and students may all be surprised when there is college failure

The Transition from Mainstream Education to College

- Vocational training
- Parent involvement
- Interagency collaboration
- Social skills training
- Paid work experience
- Individualized transition planning
- Employability training

Who is Most Successful in the Transition from Mainstream Education to College?

- Inclusionary educational settings
- Operational interagency collaboration
- Technical assistance for capacity building initiatives
- Linkage between the state's transition initiatives and general educational reform and restructuring
- High school curriculum focusing on community experiences, self-advocacy and problem-solving skills, vocational and technical education
- Authentic assessment occurs

Areas that Should Be Included

Individual areas of need whose development is critical to

- Education
- Employment
- Independent living

Planning for College

- In preparation for developing a transition plan the following should be explored:
 - Academic: what modifications have been in place and how does the student perform in various types of the classroom settings?
 - Psychological well-being: what therapies and medications are currently being utilized?
 - Physical well-being: how independent is the student in managing his own exercise, medications, diet, and sleep cycle?

Planning for College

- Social: how are the student's basic social skills and relationship development skills? Does the student have a social network upon which he or she can depend?
- Life coaching: is it realistic to expect the student to be able to function independently in basic life skills or is it necessary for that student to receive life coaching support services in order to live successfully at college?
- Family life: how much support has the family been giving the student and is it realistic to assume that that student can be successful living away from home?

Planning for College

- Any service that a student receives that is different than what typical students receive should be examined during high school
 - What can be phased out?
 - What can be transitioned with adulthood in mind?
 - Know what can be realistically expected at college and aim to create independence with those supports in mind

Planning for College

- Assessing life skill readiness and needs
 - Has the student been managing money during high school?
 - Does the student drive and will driving be part of the college experience?
 - Is the student experienced in doing laundry, caring for clothes, and shopping for necessities?
 - Is the student responsible for physical health issues such as eating properly, getting enough sleep, and taking medications as needed?
 - Does the student seek medical and mental health care when needed?

Planning for College

- Self-advocacy skills
 - Does the student fully understand his or her diagnosis, its implications, and the issues that may arise at college?
 - Is the student capable of communicating individual needs calmly and effectively?
 - Does the student understand the complexity of disclosure in terms of to whom, how much, and when?
 - Has the student been practicing self advocacy through participation in meetings regarding the individual educational plan?
 - How does the student cope with frustrations when specific needs are not met?

Level of College

- Consider academic level in context of other issues
- Weigh academic level and career goals
- An academic degree and no life skills leads to lack of life and career fulfillment or malemployment (Ramoser, 2000)
- Consider transitional steps that might include
 - Community college
 - Staying close to home or living at home at first
 - Post graduate year

Building an Interdisciplinary College Team

- Informed DSS staff
- Student counseling center staff
- Other administrative staff
- Off campus mental health providers
- Peer support group
- Coach
- Special staff at comprehensive programs
- Mentors
- Professors

Planning for College

- Differences between IDEA and ADA
 - There are no specific rights except that a person with a disability cannot be excluded from participation based solely on the disability
 - Reasonable accommodations may not fundamentally alter programs or academic standards
 - ADA is much more open to interpretation so the student must have good negotiation skills

Planning for College

- Differences between IDEA and ADA
 - Student is responsible for obtaining and paying for documentation of disability
 - Student may seek accommodations...or not

IDEA versus ADA

IDEA	ADA
A education act that guarantees every student the right to a free and appropriate education	A civil rights law that prohibits discrimination based on disability and legislates access.
Students whose education is negatively impacted by a disability.	Individuals who have a physical or mental impairment that limits a life activity, that is documented, and that does not prevent the individual from being otherwise qualified.
There are procedural safeguards, provisions for mediation, and impartial hearings if there is disagreement.	There are no procedural safeguards for education. Processes require a negotiation between individual and institution.

Reasonable Accommodations

For students with ASDs, accommodations are much more variable and may need more creativity and collaboration to develop.

- Academic
- Social
- Life Support
- Career planning

Academic Support

May not fundamentally alter programs or academic standards

Typical issues

- Time management
- Multi-processing
- Creating academic structure independently
- Prioritizing
- Organization

Social Support

- Being involved in campus life
- Surviving dorm living and living according to the Code of Conduct
- Developing support network
- Making friends
- Appropriate social behavior
- Romantic issues

Life Support

- Managing finances
- Driving
- Shopping
- Clothing and laundry
- Physical health
- Sleeping and eating
- Self awareness

Career Planning

- Working while a student
- Internships
- Job coach
- Establishing realistic expectancies for major and career
- Understanding CVs, interviews, etc.

High School versus College

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• High school<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Days filled and structured– Many small homework assignments– Students' time planned by adults– Mandatory attendance | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• College<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Relatively few hours of class– Often large, infrequent assignments that need planning– Students expected to plan time– Often no mandatory attendance |
|---|--|

High School versus College

- High school
 - Constant adult supervision
 - Support services in place
 - Free communication with parents
- College
 - Little adult supervision
 - » Academic work
 - » Free time
 - » Social behavior
 - Student must seek out and arrange use of services
 - No communication with parents

Privacy Laws

- Students over 18 are considered adults
- Parents will receive no communication about their student unless a waiver has been signed by the student and agreements have been made
- Is the student a good communicator about emotional and other issues?

Self Advocacy

- Has student been attending and participating in IEP meetings?
- Does student fully understand diagnosis, its implications, and needs?
- Can student express needs cogently and calmly?
- Has student considered disclosure issues carefully?

Disclosure

- If you want accommodations, you must disclose specific needs to the DSS (Disabled Student Services) office
- Professors are made aware that they have a person with a qualified disability in their class, but are given no idea what that disability is
- Develop a plan about who knows how much and why

Skills All Beginning College Students Need

- Self directed study habits
 - Studying large amounts of information for tests
 - Planning and executing long term assignments
- Advocating for themselves with professors, administration, and other students

Skills All Beginning College Students Need

- Being prepared for class and organizing work
- Timeliness in getting to class and completing work
- Keeping self and room organized
- Understanding appropriate classroom behavior (not dominating conversation, not interrupting, etc.)

What are typical problems and impediments?

- Student is not a good self-advocate
 - Does not ask for help from professors
 - Does not know how to frame requests for help
 - Although signed up with disability office
 - Never goes
 - Is not forthright about problems
 - Disability office has little experience with the disability and does not know how to support
 - Accommodations are insufficient or inappropriate
 - Student just hoped all problems would disappear

What are typical problems and impediments?

- Anxiety
 - Inappropriate behavior driven by anxiety in class
 - So anxious stops attending class
 - So anxious never leaves room
 - Too anxious to ask for help
 - Cannot cope with the unexpected
- Organizational problems
 - Flunks or does poorly despite excellent ability
 - Rejected by roommates because of habits

What are typical problems and impediments?

- Sex
 - Females may be naïve and get into trouble
 - Males may not understand nonverbal signs and seem to be stalking or taking advantage
 - May be uneducated in sexuality
 - May be inexperienced in friendship to romance progression

What are typical problems and impediments?

- Code of Conduct violations
 - Language too complex, abstract, or socially weighed
- Comorbid disorders
 - Student does not continue successful regimes
 - New issues develop and are not noticed
 - Student lacks coping resources and becomes overwhelmed

What are typical problems and impediments?

- Academic
 - Student makes a ridiculous schedule
 - Student cannot handle any long-term assignments or projects
 - Student dominates class and is removed
 - Student excels only at procrastination
 - Academic demands, while within ability, overwhelm other aspects of life

What are typical problems and impediments?

- Social
 - No friends and is miserable
 - Others tease and bully
 - Has no network and misses all the campus information that makes student life manageable
 - Is so over-involved in social life work does not get done
 - Without parental supervision the internet social world dominates time

What are typical problems and impediments?

- Self-management
 - Does not take care of personal hygiene in a way acceptable to others
 - Cannot manage laundry
 - Develops a terrible sleep pattern, misses classes and cannot pay attention when there
 - Had odd eating preferences that cannot be met
 - Is afraid of eating in the cafeteria and is skipping meals
 - Loses everything from medications to assignments

Assessing College Support Services

- Does the Disabled Student Services (DSS) staff understand the specific disability and the varied needs that may include?
- Are there students with this disability currently registered with the DSS office?
- How long have support services been offered by the college at the current level?
- Are there additional charges for learning support or accommodations?
- Does the college have an educational program to educate faculty about disabilities?

Assessing College Support Services

- What specific accommodations does the college offer and are they flexible about individually designing others?
- Is there a social skills support group or a more generic advocacy/support group at the college?
- Is tutoring available and by whom (level of experience/expertise?)
- Does DSS offer support in organizational, time management, study skills, planning and prioritizing, and self advocacy?
- Does the DSS office offer early registration for their students?

Assessing College Support Services

- Does the DSS office offer specialized academic advisement for their students?
- Does the DSS office assist students in selecting faculty who are more likely to understand their special needs?
- Do the offices of DSS and Counseling typically work together?
- Does anyone in the Counseling Center have experience with the disability?
- Can the DSS office arrange for a student with disability needs to talk to incoming students before application and acceptance?

Assessing College Support Services

- Does the DSS office spread their knowledge throughout the campus by training Residential Assistants, Campus Police, Professors, Administration, Librarians, and other staff about specific disabilities?
- Are there any housing accommodations available, particularly during freshman and sophomore years?
- Does the DSS office have connections with the community for making appropriate referrals?

Resource Notebook Information Every Student Needs

- Contacts
 - Friends
 - Family
 - Coach
 - Doctors
 - Professors
 - Key campus personnel
 - Transportation

Resource Notebook

- Academics
 - College requirements and distribution courses needed
 - Major requirements and progress toward
 - Record of grades
 - Class schedule
 - Schedule of assignments and syllabi

Resource Notebook

- Disability Services/Counseling Services
 - Names and contact information for staff
 - Names of those assigned to student
 - Hours of operation
 - Copy of agreement about accommodations
 - Description of each accommodation
 - Schedule for using each service

Resource Notebook

- Financial
 - How independent is student?
 - Handling money safely
 - Banking
 - Charge accounts
 - Value of money
 - Budget page
 - Income
 - Predictable expenses
 - Handling unpredictable expenses
 - Has student ever worked and will there be an opportunity on campus?

Resource Notebook

- Off-campus resources
 - Banks
 - Restaurants
 - Transportation

Resource Notebook

- Personal care instructions
 - Laundry
 - Meals
 - Groceries and supplies
 - Hygiene
 - Dressing

Resource Notebook

- Medical
 - Lists of medications, dosages, and schedule for refill
 - Does the student know where the health center is or where doctors are located?
 - Does the student have a supply of over-the-counter drugs and know how to use them?

Resource Notebook

- Social
 - Leisure activities from which to choose
 - Activities/clubs/organizations/religious groups on campus
 - Support or therapy group with schedule
 - Campus events
- Master Schedule integrating all aspects

What Can Coaches Do?

- Coaches work with executive function issues to help students develop mature and efficient self management skills
- Unlike family members, coaches can support students without emotional baggage and in the moment
- Coaches trained to work with the specific disabilities and executive function problems can bridge the transition between adolescence and independent life

What Can Coaches Do?

- Coaches realize that everything cannot be solved at the same time and help the student
 - Learn to prioritize
 - Set realistic goals
 - Create a doable plan with incremental steps appropriate to the student's current level of functioning
 - Teach the student new ways of behaving
- Coaching is a useful approach throughout the transition years

What is Coaching?

- A relationship between two equals that exists for the purpose of meeting the client's needs
- Coaching assumes that the client is competent and resourceful
- The coaching agenda comes from the client
- The coach makes spontaneous adjustments depending on the client's needs and choices
- Coaching addresses the client's whole life

Helpful Coaching Characteristics

- Goal creation and accountability create feelings of internal drive over time
- Feelings of inadequacy and self-defeat change to feelings of competency
- Ongoing aspect of coaching improves motivation
- Practicing problem solving leads to becoming a successful problem solver

Why coaching is a useful approach

- The coach is aware of both general neurobiological issues and the individual student's particular challenges
- Together coach and student come to understand the underlying causes of problems and develop effective coping strategies
- The student practices concretely how to address individual challenges rather than to endlessly experience blame.

Why coaching is a useful approach

- The experiences of creating solutions changes neural pathways in the brain.
- Coaches of students with neurobiological differences have a thorough understanding of it.
- Unlike family members, coaches can support students without emotional baggage and in the moment.

Why coaching is a useful approach

- Individuals with executive function issues are notoriously poor problem solvers and need to be supported to learn how to do so if they are to have an independent adulthood.
- Coaches consider the entire life picture and help the student grapple with whatever parts need support.

Why coaching is a useful approach

- Coaches realize that everything cannot be solved at the same time and help the student
 - Learn to prioritize
 - Set realistic goals
 - Create a doable plan with incremental steps appropriate to the student's current level of functioning
 - Teach the student new ways of behaving

Assessing Readiness

- Does the student realize help is needed?
- Does the student want coaching support?
- Is the student willing to commit to making the effort?
- Even though the student may not be ready to drive the process yet, does the coach believe that outcome is possible?

Structure

- Developing structures is a primary role of coaches
- Structures need to be individually designed for each student's strengths and challenges
- Structures are the most effective when they fit the student's personality and skills
- Is developed based on doable components

Structure

- Going through the process of putting structures in place
 - Improves focus on the goal
 - Is critical to college and life success
 - Helps keep students on track week by week
 - Reinforces
 - Attending to assignments and goals
 - Planning
 - Prioritizing
 - Organizing oneself
 - Multi-tasking

Process

- The goal of becoming independent of a coach starts with beginning to have self awareness.
- For each situation the student should
 - Look inward
 - Identify the needs
 - Describe a solution
- The coach models objective, non-threatening language and competent problem solving

Choosing areas for focus

- Areas that cause the most difficulty
- An important goal in each area
- Change the student would like to have (behaviorally specific outcomes)

Developing Strategies

- What strategies have been effective in the past
- What supports made those strategies successful
- Incorporate
 - What known about the student's strengths and weaknesses
 - Coach's knowledge about developing effective structures

Coping with Problems

- Stress management strategies
 - Coach encourages balance and check-ins about maintaining healthy habits
 - Coach encourages regular exercise
 - Coach and student have discussed what is stressful and particular attention has been paid to developing ways to address these issues
 - Coach teaches student to be more self observant

Coping with Problems

- Stress management strategies
 - If student is stuck, encourage using strengths
 - Coach encourages periods of relaxation to be scheduled
 - Coach and student brainstorm about ways to put more balance into life
 - Coach refers student for therapy

Coping with Problems

- Developing self-awareness
 - Needs a more mature awareness of own strengths and weaknesses
 - Needs to understand how they come across to others (perspective taking)
 - Becoming aware of impending overwhelm
 - Becoming aware of over-responsivity (angry too quickly) and identifying the precursors

Coping with Problems

- Self-awareness strategies
 - Working with a coach constantly brings student to self examination
 - Helping student realize they do not know enough about the neurobiological underpinnings of their condition
 - If social faux pas as a self-identified concern, regularly going over social situations and making non-judgmental observations can help develop more social awareness

Coping with Problems

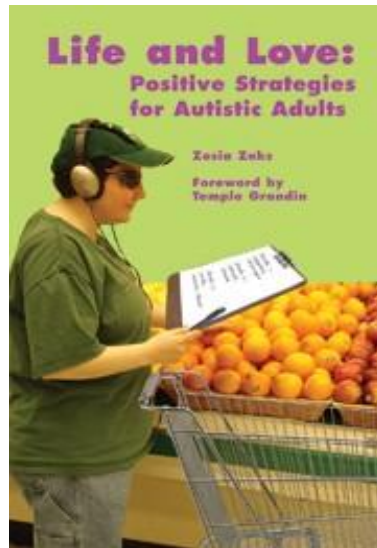
- Self-awareness strategies
 - Monitor progress-student may want to diminish some unwanted behavior
 - Plan ahead for situations where self-awareness has been an impediment
 - Create rewards for self-awareness
 - Compare past and present by keeping data
 - Refer to a therapist to do social cognition training

Issues of Romance and Sex

- Problems
 - Students who have never experienced intimate friendship and unprepared to have intimate romantic relationships
 - Students who have lack of awareness of how they come across can be very inappropriate
 - Students with poor ToM may do things to others they would not like themselves

Issues of Romance and Sex

- Problems
 - Students who are poor judges of others and do not pick up subtle social cues may do dangerous things or go with dangerous people
 - Students who become infatuated or obsessed for the first time may stalk someone
 - Inappropriate speech due to naiveté
 - Unprepared for mores on campus



Resources

- Transition Quality Indicators, Cornell University, available at www.ilr.cornell.edu/edi/transqual/docs/TQIndicators0906.pdf
- Managing the Transition Process From High School to College and Beyond: Challenges for Individuals, Families, and Society (Geller & Greenberg, 2010) available at www.aspergercenter.com
- List of available coaches <http://aspergercenter.com/collegecoaching.html>

Paths to College and Life Success

- Have a realistic understanding of the college environment and the student's individual needs and maturity level
- Develop a team and have needed supports in place before September
- Begin the self advocacy process yesterday
- Think flexibly about traditional and nontraditional paths to career and adult life