



Perspectives on Strategies for Supporting Consumers with ASD in Employment

LifeMAP Coaching Model: Lessons Learned

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Today



- Who we are and where does our experience come from?
 - What is AANE?
 - What is LifeMAP?
 - “Typical” client profile
 - Coaching - as a strategy to gain employment. How do we know it works?
- Lessons Learned
 - Each individual with AS has a unique profile
 - Set up specific, concrete, realistic goals
 - Build on strengths
 - Increase client’s self-awareness
 - Develop a strategic disclosure plan
 - Assist with Executive Function Tasks
 - Encourage parent/3rd party involvement



What Is AANE?

- Founded in 1996
- Nearly 20,000 members
- Works with families, individuals on the Autism Spectrum, and professionals
- Provides conferences, trainings, webinars, consultations, referrals, and more
- Support groups, social events and gatherings, Parent Coaching, LifeMAP teen and adult coaching programs, and more





What is LifeMAP?

- Provides practical assistance to individuals with ASDs and similar profiles
- Since 2008 we have served more than 1000 clients
- Intensive, highly individualized 1:1 coaching
- Clients acquire diverse life skills, pre- & employment skills, social communication skills, & more
- Decreases anxiety and increases independence and self-esteem





Who are our coaches?

- **Educational/professional background**
 - All have experience with ASD
 - Special Education Teachers
 - Speech Language Pathologists
 - Occupational Therapists
 - Parents
 - Retired business people
 - Clinicians
 - Graduates of Antioch ASD Program



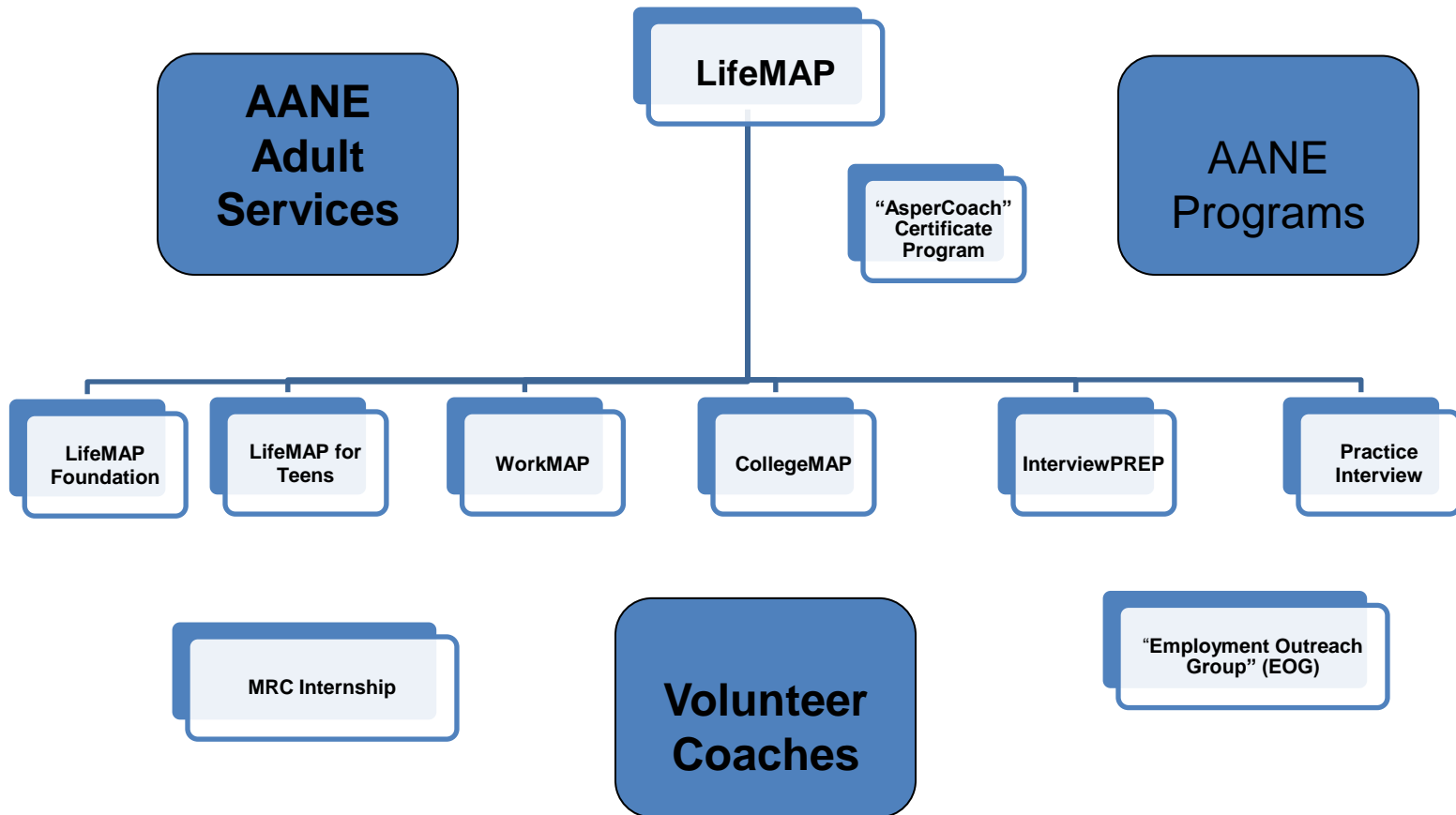
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TRAINING MANUAL
FOR COACHES BY COACHES

LifeMAP
Coaches'
Handbook



Additional Benefits LifeMAP Derives from AANE





Client Profile

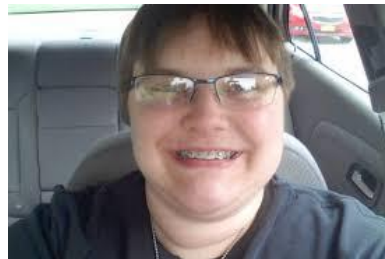
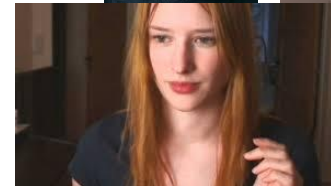




Client Profile

Our “typical” client:

- Diagnosis
- Age range
- Level of adjustment
- Openness to trying new strategies





Why Are we Talking about Coaching?

“Individualized coaching is highly recommended by experts as an effective tool for teaching life skills and promoting increased independence for adolescents and adults with ASD.”



Tony Attwood, 2009



What is Coaching?

Our Definition

- Coaching is a partnership between a coach and a client
 - Non-hierarchical
 - Coach does not offer all the answers, but supports the client in finding them
- Coach takes on roles of a mentor, assistant, cheerleader, and professional supporter
 - Observes, listens, and asks the right questions
- Coach helps to interpret neurotypical world
- Coaching is a process of looking forward, planning for the future



What is Coaching?

- Engagement in goal-oriented activities
- Building on client's strengths
- Done in the context of client's life (why?)
- Identifying obstacles and overcoming them
 - Creating step-by-step plan
- Skill-building process
- Empowerment of client to reach their full potential



How is Coaching Distinct from Other Approaches?

Therapy

- Healing emotional, psychological issues
- Retrospective

Consulting

- Expertise
- Diagnose the problem
- Find & apply solution

Mentoring

- Expertise based on own experience
- May include advising, counseling



Client/Program Evaluations

Coaches report about each client's progress in their monthly client progress reports.

Two types of self-reported surveys:

- **Anxiety/Confidence Measure**
 - Specification of the goals that the client wants to work on and a quantified measurement of how confident and anxious they are with respect to each of these goals
- **Functional Skills Assessment**
 - 52 questions regarding the client's mastery of life skills
 - Both surveys are administered every eight to ten weeks

When a client exits the program, the coach writes a final summary report in which recommended future steps for the client are indicated.

The LifeMAP Coach Supervisor follows up and surveys all former clients and the third parties involved about the client's participation in the program.



Data Analysis & Results

Initial data analysis—In 2011 (by grad interns from MIT & Tufts)

- Increase of confidence, decrease of anxiety with respect to goals
- Significant improvement in functionality

Intermediate data analysis—Since 2012 LifeMAP is being evaluated in collaboration with Professor Ashleigh Hiller, PhD, of UMASS/Lowell

- Three current research projects running:
 - Two are evaluating client's progress
 - One is investigating the inner working of LifeMAP

Results—Client progress is demonstrated in:

- Improved ability to identify appropriate goals
- Evidence of decreased need for coaching
- Diminished levels of anxiety, increased confidence
- Ability to communicate with greater independence
- Improved ability to manage time, space, and daily routine independently
- Marked improvement in appropriate dress, hygiene, and self-care
- Improved situation with education, housing, employment, finance



Before and After LifeMAP

BEFORE AND AFTER LifeMAP		
For Our Son		
Before LifeMAP	LifeMAP Coaching	AFTER LIFEMAP
Had employer/managers who did not understand or appreciate his strengths and mocked his challenges	EMPLOYMENT The LifeMAP coach helped him apply for jobs, develop resumes, helped him write a disclosure letter to inform his current employer of his strengths, challenges, and willingness to work at improvements with respect for information about areas of need before they hinder employment.	Has employer/owner who knows strengths and challenges and willing to work with both.
Did not have supportive coworkers because manager was not supportive		Has some supportive coworkers because the owner is supportive
Was in constant stress due to work		Is happy and feels useful at work
Lost job in humiliation due to Asperger type issues		Employed at a job where he feels successful
After job loss, had no income at all	Financial The LifeMAP coach helped him work on a budget and prioritize. The coach helped make contact with free legal assistance on an issue that brought in the \$13,000 that is now in savings.	Has a regular fulltime paycheck
Was being supported totally by parents		Is self-supporting
Was thousands of dollars in debt		Has \$13,000 in savings
Was not able to prioritize with money		Lives within means and on a budget
Would have been homeless if not for parents and his sister	HOME The LifeMAP coach meets at our son's apartment, so he has that to encourage him to get the place ready.	Has own apartment and pays own bills with sister's oversight
Could not keep an area clean or clear		Working on keeping apartment in livable condition
Unable to take care of himself, he was unable to care of a pet		Has a rescued cat that gets needed care and shares home
Had not had a medical exam in about 20 years due to no health insurance	MEDICAL The LifeMAP coach helped him apply for health insurance and encouraged him to get long overdue checkups. Due to this, he was found with a life threatening heart issue that he never would have had diagnosed. He also has an official Asperger's diagnosis.	Has regular checkups and is being treated for a serious heart issue that he never would have known he had or been able to treat before
Had no dental care in about 20 years due to no dental insurance		Has regular dental care and checkups
Was never officially diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome		Has a diagnosis that is so detailed that our son and others can read about his great strengths and his limitations at a glance
Was unhappy, bitter, angry	Self The LifeMAP coach studied with him to help him understand and appreciate himself. They work on self-esteem and personal issues. He is involved in AANE activities, groups, and conferences. He is glad to share that he has Asperger's Syndrome and all that means in strengths and limitations. He works on hygiene and social skills and stands up for himself when he feels wronged.	Is happy and forgiving to those who treated him poorly
Was deeply depressed (at times on family suicide watches) and was often extremely reclusive		Has become a well-rounded, outgoing, active, young man with friends
Did not understand himself, was down on self, and embarrassed by self		Understands better why he is himself and has pride in his many strengths and abilities
Did not show personal hygiene care or take care of himself well		Takes better care of himself because he respects self better
I truly believe he would not be alive without parents, sister, and LifeMAP. Now he has a life!		



Employment Challenges

Employment statistics for people with disabilities & autism

- 2015 year average:
 - 19.5% participation in labor force for people with a disability
 - 12.5% unemployment rate for people with disabilities
 - 5.1% unemployment rate for people with no disability
 - 65-85% unemployment rate for people with autism
- **US Department of Labor – Bureau of Labor Statistics**
- http://www.bls.gov/schedule/archives/empsit_nr.htm#2014



Employment Challenges

Unemployed

Underemployed

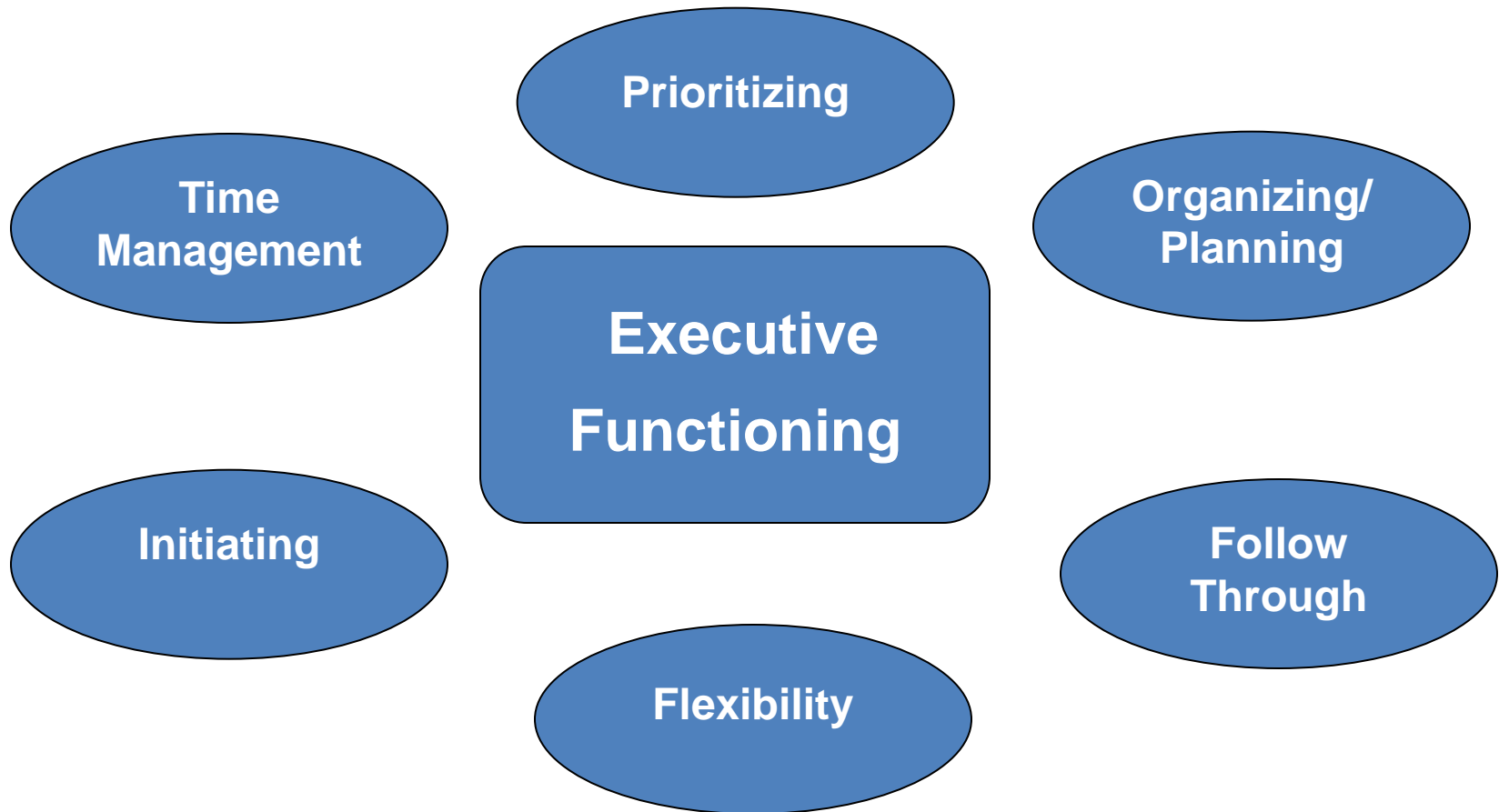
Obtain a job

Maintain a
job

**What is your consumer's
challenge?**



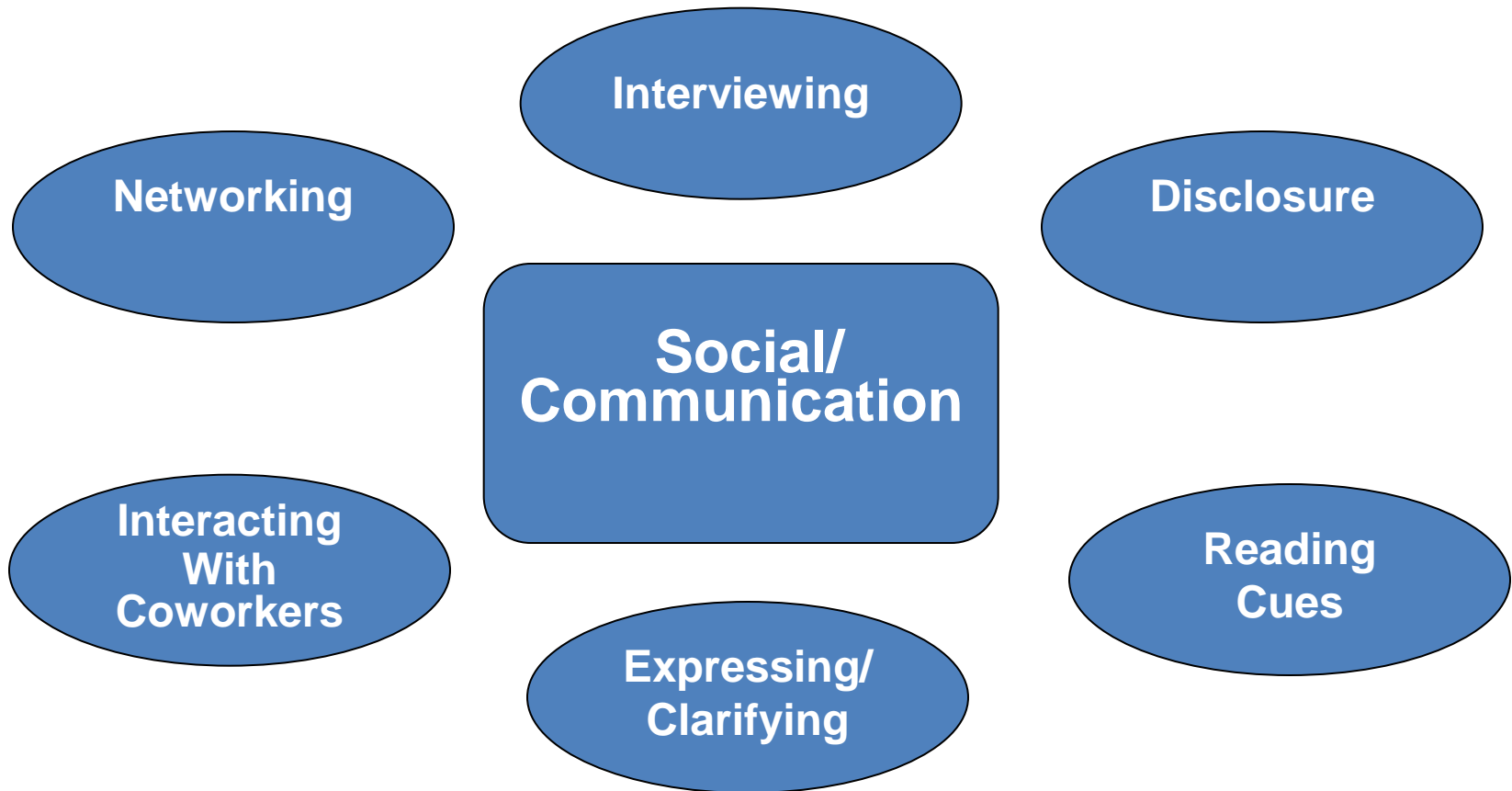
How ASD Impacts Employment?



What is your client's ASD Profile?



How ASD Impacts Employment?



What is your client's Brand of ASD?



How ASD Impacts Employment?

Sensory
Sensitivities

Hidden
Curriculum

Theory of Mind/
Perspective
Taking

Social
Communication

Black &
Thinking

ANXIETY



Nature of Employment Goals

Obtain a job

- ASD Profile/Interest
- Job Readiness
- Job match

Maintain a job

- ASD Profile strengths
- Identifying Obstacles
- Right Job Match?

You may discover that client needs to build pre-employment skills first



LifeMAP Employment Coaching



In this process you and the client may discover new strengths and various obstacles, and try to respond to those

Example: I want to find a full time employment

Specific 8 session goal: *In two months I will have an organized systematic job search where I will engage in variety of job search activities daily*



Lesson Learned

“When you’ve met one person with Asperger Syndrome— you’ve met one person with Asperger Syndrome!”

Stephen M. Shore, Ed.D. Author, Professor, Musician, Adult on the Autism Spectrum

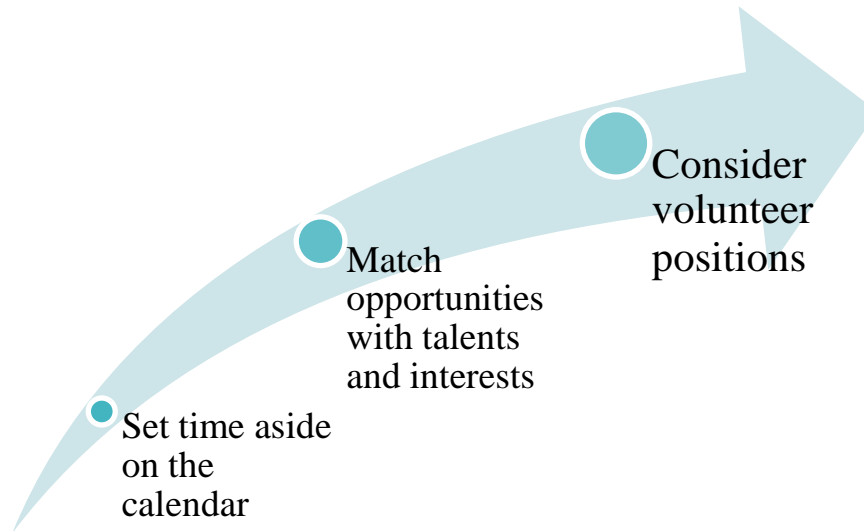
ASD?



Each Individual with Asperger Syndrome has a unique profile, unique combination of strengths and challenges



Lesson Learned



- *Main goal: Find a part time Employment*
- *Coaching goal: In two months, I will engage in job search activities daily*

*Establish specific, concrete, realistic goals.
When possible - use direct language*



Lesson Learned

- Intelligence
- Special Interests
- Honesty/Sincerity
- Loyalty
- Integrity
 - Strong sense of social justice/
right and wrong
- Sense of Humor
- Gifted
- Persistent

Build on Strengths



- Excellent memory
- Don't play (social) games
- Excellent verbal skills
- Logical
- Learn cognitively what others learn intuitively
- INTERESTING!!!



Lesson Learned

- May not be fully aware of:
 - the nature of their Disability and how it affects them and their employment
 - the accommodations they need
 - the job environments which could be a good fit
- Theory of mind, social awareness....
 -How does my behavior impact/effect other people?



Strengthen Client's Self-awareness



Lesson Learned



Develop Strategic Disclosure Plan



Lesson Learned

- Organizing
- Planning & prioritizing
- Initiating
- Problem solving
- Decision making
- Flexible thinking
- Working memory
- Impulse & emotional control
- Self - monitoring



Assist with Executive Functioning



Lesson Learned

- Appropriate advocate or helicopter parent?
- Consider:
 - Client skills
 - Over-parenting
 - Misaligned expectations
 - Parental anxiety
 - External circumstances



Encourage 3rd Party Involvement, Help to Identify Natural Supports

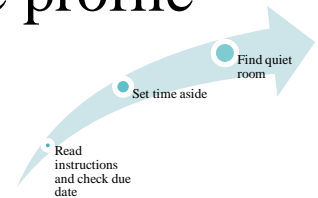


Lessons Learned



Each individual with AS has a unique profile

Set up specific, concrete, realistic goals



Build on strengths

Increase client's self-awareness



Develop a strategic disclosure plan



Assist with Executive Function Tasks



Encourage parent/3rd party involvement



Questions?

Please contact AANE with your questions.

617-393-3824

Thank you!