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Transitions for Tomorrow: An Evidence-Based Review of Post-Secondary Transition Planning for Individuals with Autism

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Transitions for Tomorrow: An Evidence-Based Review of Post-Secondary Transition Planning for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder

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Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Master of Science in Occupational Therapy degree at Thomas Jefferson University

Objectives of Presentation:
• Examine the gap in services regarding post-secondary transition planning for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
• Identify the methods used to gather relevant evidence to answer the clinical question
• Describe available evidence regarding best practice transition planning for individuals with ASD
• Discuss application of findings in practice

PICO or Clinical Question: What is the evidence on transition planning (I) for successful integration to post-secondary settings (O) for individuals with ASD (P)?

Methods:
• Databases: ERIC, Cochrane, PudMed, CINAHL
• Total number of articles found: 477  Total number of articles synthesized: 17
• Inclusion: Published within the last 12 years, peer-reviewed, English language, individuals with ASD and ranging from 12-30 years old, and transition from school to postsecondary settings
• Exclusion: Articles referring to educational systems outside of the US
• Method of critique: A primary and secondary critic completed all critiques to verify that the critiqued information was accurate. If conflicts arose during the critique process, final decisions were made through group consensus.
  o Systematic review - PRISMA Checklist (7)
  o Quantitative studies – Law and MacDermid form (4)
  o Expert opinion- A well-written expert opinion was defined as being written by authors with appropriate credentials, 30+ references cited, and use of valid peer-reviewed sources.

Results and Implications:
• Themes
  o Client-Centered Focus
    | Age:          | Most articles described a start age of 14-16 for transition planning. Two articles suggested that the transition process should begin even earlier. |
    | Self-Advocacy: | The articles emphasize that the ability to advocate for oneself is a critical aspect of the transition process. When interacting with and making decisions for clients, team members should focus on the clients’ strengths. Family involvement also contributes to more successful transition outcomes. (5) and (9) are useful articles for understanding these themes and discuss specific programs and strategies. |
    | Strengths-Based: | |
    | Family Involvement: | |
    | Team: | Transition planning is designed as an interdisciplinary approach; however, there is a need for more occupational therapy representation in the literature. |
  o Continuum of Care
    | Work: | Post-secondary work sites should be contacted to make sure appropriate supports are established prior to the client’s transition from high school. (10) and (6) are articles that describe methods for ensuring continuum of care at the work place. |
    | School: | Similar to the continuum of care at work, supports should be in place for the client before he |
or she enters a post-secondary educational setting. (11) and (1) are articles that describe supports that may be needed once an individual transitions to a post-secondary academic setting. There is limited high-level evidence regarding continuum of care in post-secondary educational settings.

- **Skill Development**

| Specific: | Literature identifies three types of skills required for successful transitions. Specific skills (“hard skills”) are task-oriented and are needed to complete a particular job. General skills (“soft skills”) are non-technical and are required for all post-secondary settings. Social skills refer to interpersonal communication necessary for successful integration. |
| General: | |
| Social: | |

- **Approaches to Skill Development and Skill Development Measures**

| Community Experiences | Approaches were described to meet the needs of the clients and facilitate their learning of identified skills. (10), (8), and (3) are useful resources that provide information on interventions regarding these approaches. These articles include measurements used to track changes in overall performance and outcomes. |
| Interactive skill | |
| Instruction | |
| Auditory Processing | |

### Resources


Please contact James Gillette for additional information at gillette.james@gmail.com.