JobTIPS: Helping Youth with ASD Transition to Employment

At-a-Glance: **Youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) are at a higher risk for unemployment or under-employment after high school than many youth with other types of disabilities. Study results show that JobTIPS, an online program that teaches interviewing skills to youth with ASD, is effective in teaching youth with ASD to give appropriate verbal responses to interview questions. This resource is available on the JobTIPS website.**

Key Findings

JobTIPS, a training tool comprised of a web-based interviewing program and a virtual reality practice session, is a useful method for working with youth with ASD who are at risk for poor performance in job interviews.

> *Youth in this study who completed the JobTIPS training program showed significant improvement in their job interviewing skills when compared to a control group who didn't complete the training.*

JobTIPS was more effective in teaching "content" than "delivery." Youth learned to give appropriate verbal responses, but the body language that accompanied the response (e.g., eye contact, affect, and posture) didn't show the same level of improvement. Practitioners may need to spend more time and provide more feedback to youth to see improved results in appropriate delivery of responses to interview questions.

Putting It into Practice

To help youth with high functioning ASD prepare for job interviews, practitioners should:

- identify areas where they struggle most, and
- provide them with repeated opportunities to rehearse appropriate responses in conditions that approximate what the youth will encounter in a real interview.

JobTIPS could be a useful tool to help practitioners do this.

Practitioners can access the training content and interview questionnaires developed in this study on the JobTIPS website. Several virtual reality practice environments, including the platform used in this study, offer user subscriptions for job skills practices.

These resources enable practitioners, parents, and educators to extend employment support options and provide needed services to rural and underserved youth with ASD in remote or poorly served areas.

More about this Research

Research suggests that youth with high functioning autism or Asperger's Disorder are three times more likely to be unemployed or to participate in daytime community-based activities than youth with ASD who have an intellectual disability. It also indicates that 90% of job losses in people with disabilities are due to a lack of social and communication skills. In this context, it's critical for providers to develop strategies to provide youth with ASD with skills to interview successfully.

This study evaluated how effective internet-based training was in teaching appropriate responses to employment interview questions to adolescents with high functioning autism and Asperger's Disorder. Training included Theory of Mind-based guidance, video models, visual supports, and virtual reality practice.

Some limitations of the study included:
- All of the participants in the study were male and possibly highly motivated since they volunteered for the study.
- It's not clear how well the study effects would be maintained over time, or how youth would respond to novel conditions, such as a new interviewer or slightly adjusted questions.

Further studies are warranted to address these limitations.

Learn More

Access this research by visiting the Project E3 Research Database.

Citation: Strickland, D.C., Coles, C.D., Southern, L.B. (2013). JobTIPS: A transition to employment program for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders. *The Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders,* 43 (10), 2472-2483.

Questions? Feedback?

Do you have questions or feedback about putting this research into practice? We're waiting to hear from you! Send us your questions or feedback

Join Our Conversation

Have you tried any of these practices? Have you had success working with these populations in your area? Tell us more and join our conversation.