



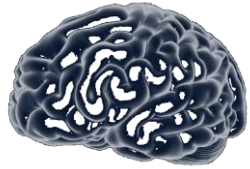
Neurodiversity Network

Learn | Work | Connect | Achieve

EMPLOYMENT FOR AUTISTIC ADULTS IN A NEURODIVERSE WORKPLACE: A WEBSITE OF RESOURCES

by Betina D. Wildhaber

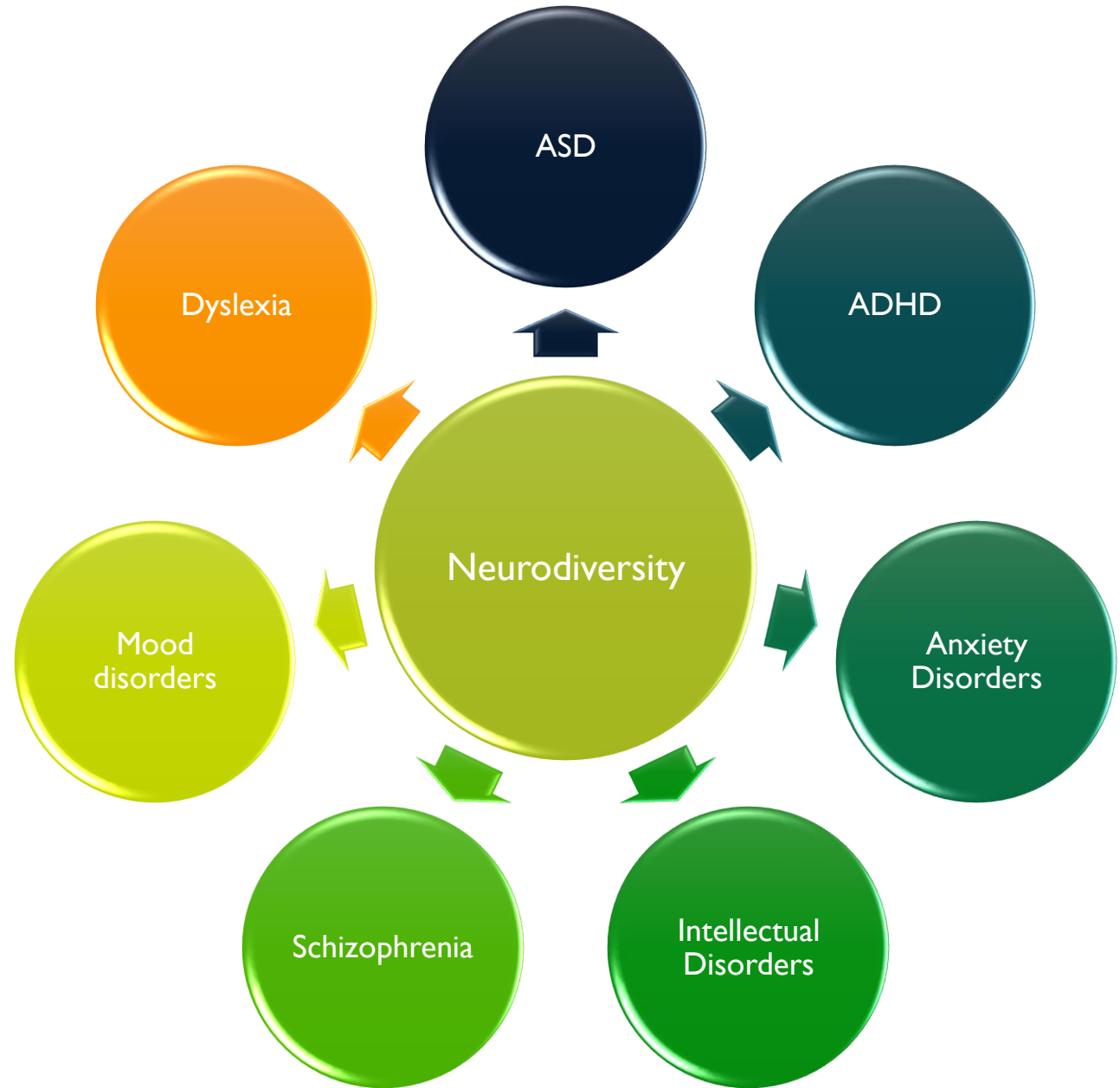
SOSC Masters Project 2019



Neurodiversity
 “Neuro” = minds
 “Diversity” = variety

**Autism Spectrum
Disorder – ASD
 (autistic)**

Neurotypical



AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD)

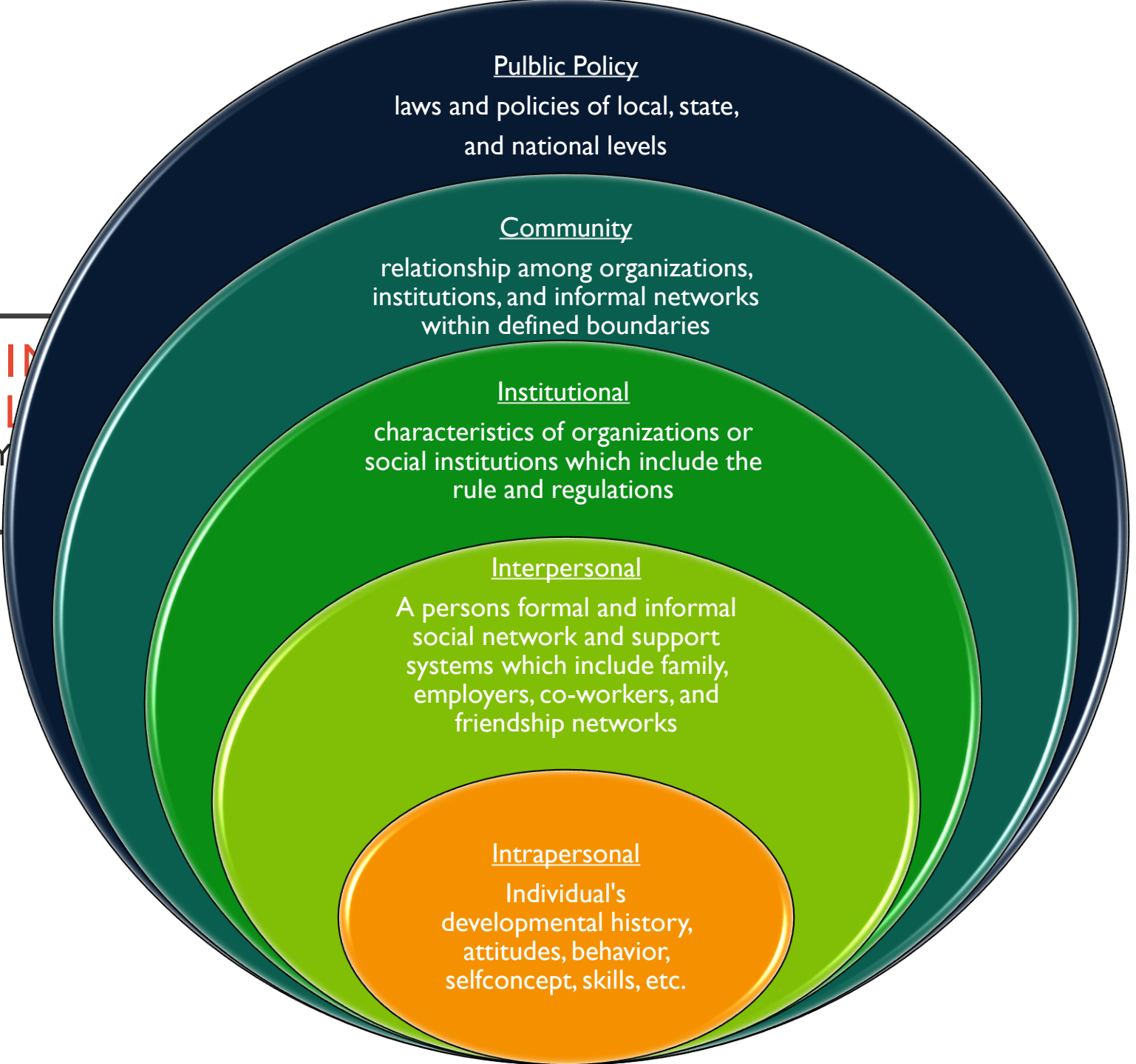
TRANSITION INTO ADULTHOOD

EMPLOYMENT

NEURODIVERSITY

IMPLEMENTING NEURODIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE

IN
SOCIAL
BY



WHY BUILD A WEBSITE?

lower employment rates

Services and funding (transitioning into adulthood):

Limited | Insufficient Research Outcomes | Lack Funding

lower wages and work fewer hours

Neurodiverse work environment

Central information/resources are limited

AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD) “AUTISTIC”

not always categorized so broadly

- 1952: **DSM-I** schizophrenic reaction, childhood type
- 1980: **DSM-III** pervasive developmental disorder (PDD)
- 1987: **DSM III-R** pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified (PDD-NOS), or “atypical autism”
 - 1994 **DSM IV** & **DSM IV-TR** PDD w/subtypes:
 - Autistic Disorder
 - PDD-NOS
 - Asperger Disorder
 - Rett disorder
 - Disintegrative disorder



2013 **DSM 5** Autism Spectrum Disorder

“If you’ve met one person with autism, you’ve met
one person with autism”

Dr. Stephen Shore | Lime Connect 2018

ASD CONTINUED...

1 in 59 births

Baio et al. (2018)

Closer to 1 in 40

Kogan et al. (2018)

- focused on children.
- 4x in males than females
- represent about 1 percent of the population



- data for prevalence among autistic adults/elderly limited
(DSM, 2018)

“it’s that we’re finding them”

- Dena Gassner

(Keynote Speaker 2018)



- autism is a lifelong condition
- twenty years from now an autistic person will be developmentally in a different place
(Robinson, 2017)

TRANSITION INTO ADULTHOOD

“transition age”: adolescent ages 14-16 - adulthood at 24 to 26 (HHS, 2017)

graduate | postsecondary education | independent living/housing | gainful employment

(Hendriks, 2009; Pelt, 2008; Parsi & Elster, 2015; HHS, 2017; Bernick & Holden, 2018; Kandalaft et al., 2012)

Anxiety, mood disorders, ADHD, and depression

(HHS, 2017; Horowitz et al., 2017)

70% - one ‘comorbid mental disorder’, and **40%** - 2+ (DSM-5)

79% at least once in their life

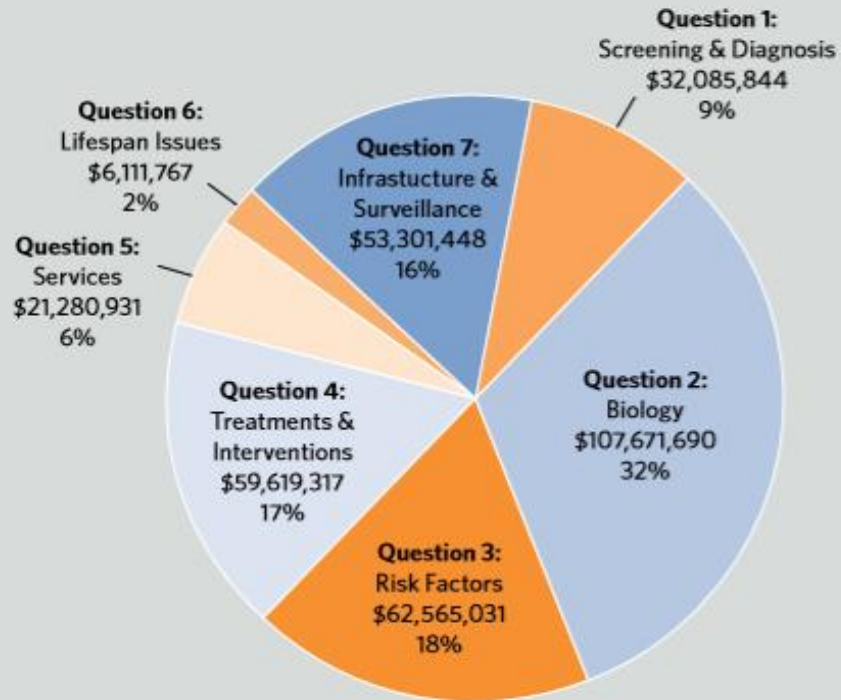
Horowitz et al. (2017) and Lever & Geurts (2016)

9x’s more likely to die from suicide and **5x’s** as likely to attempt suicide than the general public

(Mandell, 2018, p.234).

TRANSITION CONT.

ASD Research Funding by IACC Strategic Plan
Question — Combined Federal and Private Funding, 2015
Total Funding: \$342,636,029



NOTE: Topic areas are defined by each question in the IACC Strategic Plan. Question 6, which focuses on issues across the lifespan, represents only 2 percent of the overall ASD research funding across both federal and private funding sources. SOURCE: Office of Autism Research Coordination, National Institute of Mental Health.

- Transitional plan (WIOA)
- **entitlement-driven system** (i.e., special education) to **multiple eligibility-driven systems** (e.g., adult services, postsecondary education, disability services, housing supports)
- 2/3 of young autistics do not move onto employment or other education in the first two years after leaving high school (Abrams, 2016; HHS, 2017)

US Department of Health and Human Services. (October 2017).

Report to congress: Young adults and transitioning youth with autism spectrum disorder.

on lifespan issues: **ONLY 2%** Fed & Private funding

One way to enhance a person's well-being and mental health is through employment

(Modini et al., 2016; van der Noordt et al., 2014)

increase in mental well-being, and a low incident rate of suicide

(Modini et al., 2016)

strong evidence employment reduces the risk of depression

(van der Noordt et al., 2014, p.734)

EMPLOYMENT

Unemployment estimated: 70 and 90 percent %.

(Abrams, 2016; Bernick & Holden, 2018; Harmuth et al., 2018; Hendricks, 2009; Sarrett, 2017).

Barriers:

Individual: communications, social skills, recognizing social cues, and developing and maintaining social norms; restricted or repetitive patterns of behavior (*SEM intrapersonal*)

(Harmuth et al., 2018; HHS, 2017; Scott et al., 2015).

Organization: lack of long-term workplace support, negative attitudes, and the level of social expectations a work environment has (*SEM Institutional/Community*)

(Anderson et al., 2017; Bernick & Holden, 2018; Harmuth et al., 2018; McLeroy et al., 1988).

Small % obtain community employment; low retention rates

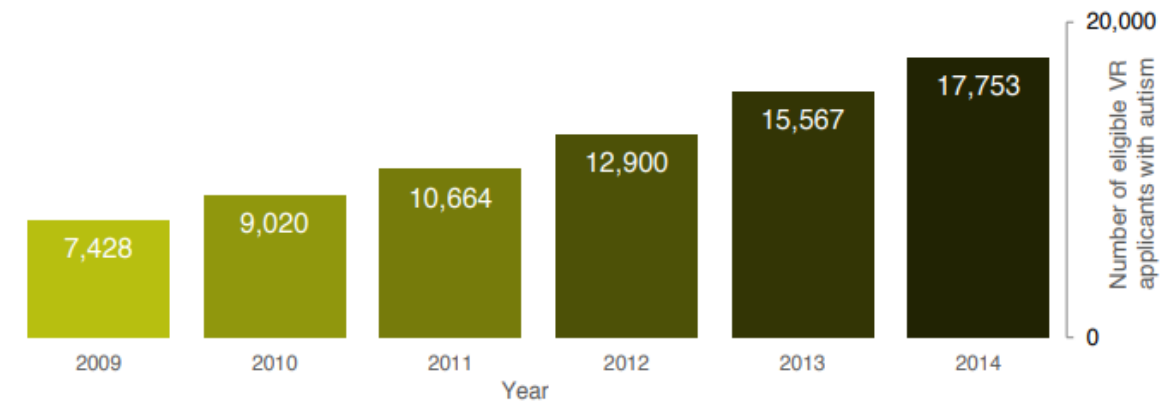
Low wages, poor conditions, shortened hours, limited opportunities for growth, positions are a poor fit, and inadequate training for the job

Vocational Rehabilitation:

- largest public funder of employment (US)
 - 60% employed – 80% P-T & poverty
 - 48% exited with refusal and unknown reason

(Roux et al., 2016)

The number of individuals with autism applying to VR for support has increased steadily.



Source: Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA-911), FFY 2009-2014

- 63 of 64 gained CIE through CE Wehman et al., (2015)

EMPLOYMENT CONT.

School-based internship = fewer intervention hours

Postsecondary education can also improve CIE

Wehman et al. (2015)

Programs, such as vocational rehabilitation, can help autistic individuals adapt their behavior at work and train employers to understand how basic accommodations can help autistic adults succeed (Abrams, 2016). - John Elder Robinson

Few studies show the perspectives of the employer and employers' needs for the successful employment of autistic adults (Hedley et al., 2017).

autism-specific job environment

NEURODIVERSITY

“neurological diversity” – better represented as its own political category (class, gender, race)

(Singer, 2017).

equality, acceptance, and inclusion

excludes the perspective to be “fixed,” cured, or otherwise normalized

effort to bring awareness to society and public acceptance of neurodivergent differences and strengths of autistic persons.

(Bernick & Holden, 2018; Elder, 2008; Grandin & Panek, 2013; Kaufman & Doutsopoulos, 2013; Sarrett, 2017; Silberman, 2015; Singer, 2017; Todd, 2018).

IMPLEMENTING NEURODIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE

Specialisterne ("the specialist")



- “Team with “social partners” for expertise you lack”
- “Use nontraditional, no interview-based assessment and training processes”
- “Train other workers and managers”
 - “Set up a support ecosystem”
- “Tailor methods for managing careers”
 - “Scale the program”
 - “Mainstream the program”

(Austin & Pisano, 2017)



JPMORGAN CHASE & CO.



AUTISM AT WORK

Microsoft

Ford

Ernst & Young

Hewlett Packard Enterprise

Systems, Applications and Products (SAP)

Fidelity Investments

Freddie Mac

JP Morgan Chase and Co.

Cintas

Spectrum Designs

Travelers

Ultra Testing

Willis Towers Watson

DXC Technology

Rising Tide Car Wash

PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

To create a website of resources that promote meaningful employment for autistics.

- A tool for employers who may want to hire autistic, or other neurodivergent individuals, but are not sure how to meet their needs, or identify strengths.
- A tool for autistic adults, and other neurodivergent individuals, who seek employment and need resources to help them toward meaningful employment.



WEBSITE MAP

For Job Seekers

Assessments

Résumé and tool kits

Work experience and
professional coursework

Communication

Programs and Community

Connect Online

Self care

For Community

Guides and tools

Professional coursework

For Employers

Neurodiverse companies

Creating a neurodiverse
workplace

Advocates and leaders

Information

Fact sheet

Books

Articles

Conferences

Policy and government

Podcast (*NEW!*)

SEM Model Factors

Neurodiversity in the workplace

Website Components

Public Policy
laws and policies of local, state,
and national levels

provide funding for lifespan issues | conduct research | contact your Representative | read current legislation

policy & government

Community
relationship among organizations,
institutions, and informal networks
within defined boundaries

“social partners” for expertise | attend conferences | invite autistic advocates to present at the company | expand the neurodiverse environments

programs & community | conferences | books | articles | advocates & leaders | how to create a neurodiverse workplace

Institutional
characteristics of organizations or
social institutions which include
the rule and regulations

train staff | neurodiversity awareness | positive attitudes | supportive workplace | flexible schedule | nontraditional interview | assessment/training process | mentors/coaches | “soft skills” workshop | goal setting | mainstream autistic work programs | environment that works for all

neurodiverse companies | creating neurodiverse workplace | advocates & leaders

Interpersonal
A persons formal and
informal social network and
support systems which
include family, employers,
co-workers, and friendship
networks

mentor social skills | education and awareness of autistic development and services | advocate | connect with organizations | Person-Centered Practices

guides & tools | professional coursework programs & community

Intrapersonal
Individual's
developmental history,
attitudes, behavior,
selfconcept, skills, etc.

career assessments | social skills | vocational skills | build resume and interview skills | social networks | programs | self-care

assessments | resumes & tool kits | work experience & coursework | communication | programs | connect online | self-care

METHODOLOGY CONT.

Reliability and Validity

Limitations

Reliability and Validity

- **Assessment** (Department of Education, Office of Federal TRIO Programs)
 - accuracy, authority, objectivity, currency, coverage, accessibility, design, content, technological aspects and interactivity, and originality.

Limitations

- Programs and services are limited
- New programs lack long-term research outcomes and may not be evidence-based (reducing the validity of the website content)
- Neurodiverse workplace and their effectiveness to address barriers are biased,
 - most information is derived from self-reported information and neurodiverse company materials.
- Lack of research on the neurodiverse workplace setting
- Website limitations in accessibility - universal design

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS

Website helps address the issues

It is important that each level makes the contributions

Website components influenced by SEM

Create more awareness

Comprehensive resources listed in one location, with effort to increase access to services

Neurodiverse workplaces

- Develop an environment that addresses the barriers
- Bring more awareness of the neurodiversity concept and applying it to the workplace
- Decreased unemployment rates
- Provide a supportive work environment while utilizing strengths

Website

- Identify neurodiverse companies
- How companies can get onboard
- Effort to bring awareness
- Programs identified

RECOMMENDATIONS

Expand the website

Post-secondary education,

Housing

Healthcare

Independent living

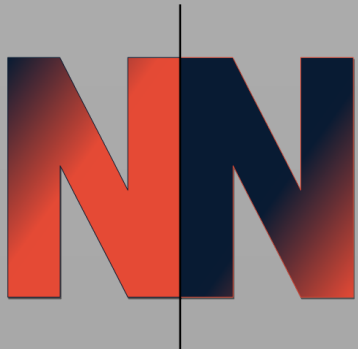
- Ethnographic approach to provide insight on neurodiverse companies and employees
- More research is essential – may promote more funding
- Gaps in understanding why success is low in transition period



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www.neurodiversitynetwork.net



DSM-V

Table A1 Severity levels for autism spectrum disorder

Severity level	Social communication	Restricted, repetitive behaviors
Level 3 “Requiring very substantial support”	Severe deficits in verbal and nonverbal social communication skills cause severe impairments in functioning, very limited initiation of social interactions, and minimal response to social overtures from others. For example, a person with few words of intelligible speech who rarely initiates interaction and, when he or she does, makes unusual approaches to meet needs only and responds to only very direct social approaches.	Inflexibility of behavior, extreme difficulty coping with change, or other restricted/repetitive behaviors markedly interfere with functioning in all spheres. Great distress/difficulty changing focus or action.
Level 2 “Requiring substantial support”	Marked deficits in verbal and nonverbal social communication skills; social impairments apparent even with supports in place; limited initiation of social interactions; and reduced or abnormal responses to social overtures from others. For example, a person who speaks simple sentences, whose interaction is limited to narrow special interests, and who has markedly odd nonverbal communication.	Inflexibility of behavior, difficulty coping with changes, or other restricted/repetitive behaviors appear frequently enough to be obvious to the casual observer and interfere with functioning in a variety of contexts. Distress and/or difficulty changing focus or action.
Level 1 “Requiring support”	Without supports in place, deficits in social communication cause noticeable impairments. Difficulty initiating social interactions, and clear examples of atypical or unsuccessful responses to social overtures of others. May appear to have decreased interest in social interactions. For example, a person who is able to speak in full sentences and engages in communication but whose to- and fro- conversation with others fails, and whose attempts to make friends are odd and typically unsuccessful.	Inflexibility of behavior causes significant interference of functioning in one or more contexts. Difficulty switching between activities. Problems of organization and planning hamper independence.

