



**SL Global**  
[www.SLGlobalSolutions.com](http://www.SLGlobalSolutions.com)





Michelle LaMarc...:

[00:00:18](#)

Hello and welcome. My name is Michelle LaMarche. I'm a board certified behavior analyst and the executive director of Step-by-Step Academy. And I also work with Special Learning today. We're going to talk about transition survival. It's a continuation of our series on transition survival for adolescents and young adults. And going into that adult world, we're going to focus on vocational topics and job coaching in particular. And I hope by the end, you'll leave with a really good understanding of number one, the challenges and barriers that you're going to face in trying to find employment and prepare for employment options for individuals with autism spectrum disorders. But also number two, you're going to learn about some of the common vocational assessments that are out there, the good, the bad, the difficulties, and you know, the pieces that are successful in terms of implementation. And number three, we're going to look at specific techniques that both supervisors support staff, job coaches, as well as the individuals with autism will need in order to make this a more successful job placement. And finally, we'll look at how those with autism who are interested in finding a job can be supported overall to both obtain and maintain a good job that has what we would call meaningful employment and a great living wage for them. And certainly that's something that we all want to achieve. So I welcome you and we'll get started.

Michelle LaMarc...:

[00:01:54](#)

One of the first things that we want to talk about is just to familiarize ourselves with what we're dealing with in the community. This is the scope of the problem that you should be prepared for. Studies show that approximately 50 to 75% of adults with an autism spectrum disorder are unemployed. And in many cases, those who want to be employed are unable to find employment or the employment that they're finding doesn't really pay a real life wage. In a study that was done by Hendrix in 2010, she looked at the unemployment and the under-employment of people with autism in particular. And what she found was, again, despite their desire to work, many adults with autism remains still unemployed or they're working jobs that they don't like. And those jobs typically pay very poorly.



Michelle LaMarc...: [00:02:45](#)

Some of the advantages, and this should be common sense to most of us, of having employment. Of course, we talk about the monetary benefits and we try to make it really relative to the things that that that person is interested in and shops for on a regular basis. And also explain to them about, you know, their living environment and the costs associated with that. We're also hoping that if we have higher rates of employment for individuals with autism spectrum disorders, that we'll have less reliance on the state and the federal government to support and create programs for those individuals, because they'll become part of the community and supported by that community, just like anyone else. This will give them access to health benefits. It does show in the literature that it demonstrates an increased self-worth that that person will have as well as their self-esteem.

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:03:37](#)

Overall, it also demonstrates that that person will start to have an increase in their productivity across all environments. And finally, for those of us who are either family members or even, you know, clinicians, practitioners and teachers that work with the individuals with autism spectrum disorders, our goal is really to help them really move away from being so isolated from all of the others that are in our community. The more that we can give them those opportunities, the more likely the community will be able to support that person's life and, and also the activities that they're interested in when we're not around. So one of the things that she created or she actually identified at the end of her study was meaningful employment. And I'm summarizing here equals wages, which also equals self-sufficiency. And finally that leads to an improved quality of life.

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:04:34](#)

Here's what we know a percentage of the people who are on the spectrum actually display several challenging behaviors. And that is going to be a major roadblock to obtaining and maintaining successful employment. In addition, increased challenges for those who have a comorbid disorder is going to occur, and you need to be prepared for that. And we'll talk about that a little bit more later on. Also, it was interesting to read in terms of some of the books and strategies that are out there, what people find in their studies. And this is across the board is that it's not typically the lack of a person's ability to perform the actual job task or duty that causes problems in maintaining or obtaining successful employment. But in fact, it's



the lack of appropriate social behavior in their repertoire. So the social behavior actually is really the largest hindrance because of all these issues that people with autism, spectrum disorders face, we're looking at the need for specialized support services and systems that will help them really in the beginning to get them placed, identify what their needs are, motivations interests.

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:05:46](#)

We'll get into the details here soon, and then also supporting them once they are transitioned into that environment. And often you'll find that it's going to be possibly a longterm level of support. One of the things that was very clear when we studied the literature over the last couple of years, as we've moved into the adolescent and adult community and providing services and supports out in the community, the home and also in jobs is that most of the time, if there are no supports that basically equals there won't be a job for those individuals. It is too difficult for many, many reasons for the person with autism to number one, get the job number two, keep the job, and then also understand all the components that are included in having a job.

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:06:37](#)

So, for that we want to know a little bit more about the, how the system works. And some of the things we should be aware of is that there is a lack of training for both the employers and also the coworkers of the individual who is obtaining the job and they don't really know much about the disorder. And, and, and that makes it much more difficult for them to know how to respond, how to interact and those sorts of things. In addition, there is a stigma as it relates to the challenging behaviors that we may see a person with autism demonstrate typically, you know, many people are uneducated and have only seen a few movies, you know, popular movies that have been out there like rain man or something of that sort. And so their, their focus or their view of autism is very limited.

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:07:28](#)

And it's our responsibility as support staff and the support systems that we are trying to create to make sure that we give them that information and help change their perception and, or just give them the accurate per you know, information so that they can become more educated and hopefully more comfortable in working with people with disabilities. One of the other things that we learned in our system is that there is a lack



of opportunities available to people with autism spectrum disorders. One of the studies that that's out there that comes to mind immediately is it was a comparison among individuals with other special needs to specifically the autism special needs population that were participating in this study. And it was definitely clear that those with other special needs had a better opportunity or chance to get jobs across many different environments and also maintain those jobs.

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:08:27](#)

Unlike people with autism, one of the things we also find is difficult, and this is really in our everyday practice. And the literature indicates this as well, is that at this point, you're getting ready for a transition for 18 years. We have parents who have done everything for their children and trying to get them all the supports, the services and their education and all of the things that they do in the home in order to make sure that their child can be successful. It becomes a really scary time for the parents individually in specific. And we find that we end up spending a lot of time with the parents, almost just as much as we spend with the individual in preparing for this transition, but in focusing on different, you know, areas of need. So they do show that there's a real tough time for parents to let go and transition their responsibilities, trying to find their own place in terms of now, what is, what are they around for?

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:09:28](#)

You know, they've spent all of this time and this was their job. So to speak for many, many years. And what is the next step for them as an individual, as well as the fears that come with a transition and not knowing if the employment opportunities, the, you know, the vocational placements and even the living placements that their child may be transitioning to are safe and are going to, you know, provide a supportive and growing and, and enriching environment for their child. And finally, we know as service providers that there isn't much out there to guide us. And where do we even begin to look for those employment opportunities for people with autism? It takes a lot of foot work and we have to, you know, start from the ground and move up. There are certainly some, some companies that have adopted, you know, a mission to employ people with disabilities and support them in their in their environment. But those are few and far between is what we're learning. And so it's going to take a lot of work on the upfront to number one, identify what





exists, and then try to create other opportunities. If there isn't one that's appropriate.

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:10:42](#)

Let's look at the barriers today. We are going to cover several of them. And I'll give you some specifics in each of these areas, but this is a quick overview of the things we'll talk about first will be the support services in general, what we should know, what we should be aware of and the challenges that we're going to run into, perhaps also the social skill challenges, much of this won't come as a surprise, but we're going to really look at the specific social skills needed and communication skills needed to function in a vocational environment, which interestingly enough may not equal your priorities that you're working on right now. And so being aware of that may also help you develop a better treatment plan and overall work plan and training plan for that child while you still have time to work with them and prepare them for this transition.

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:11:36](#)

So that does move, move into the communication and language difficulties as well. Challenging behavior. That is definitely one that we are experiencing in our practice. And we work with on a daily basis. We'll talk about all the different kinds of challenging behaviors that, that that we run into, but not, not just the challenging behaviors that we're familiar with as it relates to the characteristics and symptoms of autism, but beyond that, and the challenges that we run into their executive functions, if you're not familiar with that, we'll define that for you today. And we'll also give you an idea of a list of potential executive functions that you may want to look at. There's a lot of increased information that's available. And you'll find that if you just do some Google searches, you can find lots of different skillsets that are related to executive functions, and that will give you an opportunity to create a good treatment plan around that.

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:12:36](#)

Quite frankly, we're learning that executive function training needs to start very early on, even in a preschool. So it's something that many people aren't aware of when they're first with a child with autism and, and you don't often see on IEP or treatment plans in the clinics that, that you work with. And there are things that we probably should be starting right from the beginning, according to the literature that's available and what it can teach us. We will look at co occurring disorders, very



briefly identifying the most common ones, lack of preplanning and placement is definitely a barrier. And we'll talk about that lack of early learning and practice as well as different employment options and issues. And that can become barriers for trying to find a good vocational placement for your child.

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:13:32](#)

Hi. So let's start with support services. Well, support services are different from state to state. That would be one thing that everyone should be aware of and you'll, you will benefit and taking the time to do a little bit of research in terms of what's available around you. One of the common ones is vocational rehabilitation centers or service support systems that are probably pretty similar from state to state. And we've talked about that one in the past and our other transition series presentations, but this one is one of the first ones you should look for. We want to identify number one, what services do they include in their and their vocational rehab program, as well as how do we pay for those services and try to get that information early on while we still have a few years left in high school, that way we have time to prepare and do research and, and identify ways to make that a successful transition into vocational rehab service programs.

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:14:32](#)

They can be very, very helpful in terms of supports when actually finding that employment placement. One of the things that we find also that's a barrier is that if services are available, let's say you're lucky enough. And you're in a particular state or County that has you know, a very rich of services. It, it doesn't necessarily mean that they're going to be enough. And that typically comes down to, you may have some of the services, maybe it's two hours a month where really, you know, the individual that you're working with or your child demonstrates a need for many more hours, you know, in a month. And there are a lot of caps around those services that are available because it is costly. You'll see that many individuals do need intense support, especially early on first and foremost. And then we try to fade that over time, of course, and that the specialized training that's needed for any of the support staff isn't really provided.

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:15:33](#)

So that's another barrier. If we're transitioning an individual to a new environment, that's already one thing that we have to work with one variable that could be impacting success and



possible problem behaviors from increasing. And then we moved to having support staff who aren't really prepared for this particular diagnosis or disorder and all of the symptoms and characteristics that come with it. And we're finding that really, that is the case. So we're having to do a lot of education upfront with those support staff and make sure that they're familiar with autism, Asperger's PDD, nos, the differences between them, how you may actually support each individual differently based on their own needs. And that's something that you don't often see specifically around the areas of the severity of the symptoms that you may come across, as well as the co occurring disorders and how they impact a person's ability to, you know, maintain themselves in any environment. But specifically, we're talking about the vocational environment, as well as the difficulty. If you have an intellectual disability along with the autism diagnosis.

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:16:44](#)

In addition, we look at the

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:16:46](#)

Support services and identify that most of the people that we work with, we've got many, many gains that they've made over the years and they're doing well, but they tend to need longterm support. And we need to be prepared for that because that's typically difficult to find and making sure that we're, we're looking at those options and, and getting ready to create our own longterm support systems if they don't exist in our area. And then finally, as I indicated, when it comes to challenging behaviors or, or some of the, I would say aggressive ritualistic behaviors that can really impede a person's ability to participate in their vocational environment, most practitioners just don't have the appropriate training and haven't had the experience in that area. And then they find themselves not able to support the individual very well.

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:17:43](#)

Interestingly studies found that people with autism spectrum disorders were likely to be services if their needs were too severe. And then yet on the other end, we find that high functioning individuals with autism or Asperger's syndrome are less likely to even qualify for the support services that are available. So it seems to me that the support structure that's out there tends to serve the middle of the road, and it leaves these two major populations, the unserved, and finding it difficult to get the necessary supports in order to get that job.





And also keep that job over time. We do know that people who are demonstrating severe behaviors and have symptoms that are reoccurring in that manner, they definitely have been proven to need more expensive services, longterm services, more intense services, which then of course, rises that cost as well. And that can be a barrier because there isn't much funding out there for adults.

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:18:48](#)

And most of the, the support structures or systems and resources that we're running into are designed for early intervention, which is fabulous. That was great. And it's a great movement. But now as our kids get older, we're finding there's a really large gap in, in what's available. We also learned from studies that individuals who come from a higher income family a well educated family, they are more likely to obtain the support services that will be helpful to them. So we're learning that we need to spread out and educate all of the different demographic areas that we serve, because most of them don't know. It seems that either services are available, perhaps how to establish those services and, and don't seem to have the support just to even get it started. And that was something that has come out of several studies that actually,

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:19:45](#)

And

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:19:45](#)

Then we look at people with autism spectrum disorders, some of them do also have cognitive challenges, and that can be a possible barrier when you're trying to find a good vocational placement and identify what their highest level of ability is to earn a real life wage.

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:20:08](#)

This one shouldn't come to a surprise for anyone really, and we've covered social skills in, in the manner of just being able to participate in your community, create friendships and relationships, as well as maintain yourself in any environment self-regulate and those sorts of things. But there are specific social skills that we find and practice, and that have been identified in, in the studies that are out there that are tied to vocational and employment placements. Specifically, those include limited recognition and understanding of social cues not understanding how humor works or, you know, the idioms that are used and all of the slang that that's being used, you know, by their coworkers and sometimes their supervisors, the



appropriate use of humor. Typically the, the individuals we work with are also unaware of, of, or they have a complete lack of understanding of social rules in general.

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:21:12](#)

And some of the curriculums that you'll be looking at I'm sure are the hidden curriculum, others perspective, theory of mind, those sorts of things. And that's where you're going to start looking at what are those social rules and which ones are in existence in that particular vocational environment. And then also, which ones are just general hidden social rules that we need to make sure we're preparing and teaching. The individuals we work with, one of the other barriers is that most people with ASD are unable to self-advocate. They're not able to get their needs met in the moment, very easily, mostly due to some communication barriers, as well as possibly challenging behaviors, which we always bring back to communication, the inability to communicate what you're feeling, what you need may also lead to those challenging behaviors. So self-advocacy is a component that becomes concerning, especially when you talk about transitioning parents from having done that for so many years, to now the individual needing to do that independently and initiate that self advocacy skills and abilities.

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:22:22](#)

Also, we find that most of the individuals that we work with have a limited understanding or challenges and understanding other people's perspective and how their behavior can impact how other people are going to respond. So we do want to talk about other's perspective over time and focus on even minimizing the likelihood that they'll run into social situations that they will have to interact perhaps. So we'll, we'll re reduce the demand certainly on the onset until we can see some, some comfort and some mastery in some of the skills that we may be teaching on the side, as we are trying to support that individual, another barrier communication and language, one of the primary barriers that we run into in all environments, specifically, when you're talking about vocational placements and keeping a job, you need to be able to ask for help. We find that most of the individuals that we work with are not able to ask for help in all environments, all situations, they're not able to generalize that to different people, perhaps know exactly what language to use depending upon that situation.



Michelle LaMarc...: [00:23:35](#)

So there are details within that particular skill that we need to focus on. In addition, we talk about difficulty and understanding and following directions, if the directions too complex, perhaps they're they're in directions that they've never heard before and not had experience with or practice, then we're going to find that that may be difficult as well. There's little or no reciprocal conversation skills typically. And again, when I talked just a moment ago, one of our strategies is to reduce the social demands and the social interactions that the person is required to participate in during the work day, in order to help again, build their confidence and comfort over time as we're teaching these skills on the side, and then they can apply them later with our help, hopefully

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:24:24](#)

They

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:24:24](#)

also find that, especially in the questionnaires and studies that they've completed across the board, that most people have a difficult time asking for further explanation. Number one, they, they might not even identify that a direction was given. And number two, when that direction is given, they may actually find that that was too much language all at once. Perhaps, maybe it was too fast. Maybe the actual verbiage that was used could be modified and simplified in some manner. Maybe it could be put into some sort of visual format, and those are going to be the things that you're going to look at in order to create more positive and successful environment for the person that you're working with and supporting as a job coach.

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:25:10](#)

So teaching

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:25:12](#)

Them away to ask for things to be repeated is going to be crucial, or for them to say, can you explain that further? Or can you write that down for me will be a really important skill because they're going to be receiving directions all day long that I have not been typically pre-taught. And when we think about the directions that our kiddos are used to hearing in the school environment, those are things that they've had many, many years of practice hearing and responding to also in the home. Now we're in a new environment where we can't predict every direction that's going to come across today. And so that makes it more difficult in, in general. And what we are finding is we, if we can coach those supervisors of, you know, the individual



that's working that job to keep the directions as simple as possible, but also keep them the same from day to day or from task to task. That can be very helpful as well, in terms of modifications while we're doing those modifications. It's also helpful to be trying to coach generalization across different language and discrimination across different language so that they can better respond in those unpredictable environment.

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:26:26](#)

We also see that they're not able to, typically

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:26:29](#)

identify when they need a break. And that's one of the things that we work on in terms of self regulation of emotions and behaviors, and choosing the appropriate way to calm yourself bring yourself to the center so that you can then perform the task at hand. If they're not able to ask for those breaks, we may even want to look at building those in, and we'll talk about that a little bit later, but this is where it comes down to that self advocacy component. When you're talking about asking for further explanation or simplification, as well as I need a break, I think that, you know, I've, I've worked too long, or I'm not sure if I can do this much longer and can I have my reinforcer and really trying to structure the environment so that they have the ability to do all of these things successfully. Other final barriers that we've identified in communication and language specifically are the difficulty in identifying and communicating the sport supports that they need to be successful. Most of us who have worked with people with autism, we've identified strategies that have helped them, you know, accomplish completing their homework, perhaps, or even following say a daily schedule in order to get dressed. So we've identified things that have worked for that individual in particular, and

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:27:52](#)

The individual doesn't

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:27:53](#)

Often have the ability to say to their supervisor or coworker, can you put that in writing, going back to that example, or I need help. Can we draw this out? And can you model it for me? So whatever those strategies are that you've identified to be successful in the school environment, and then the home environment, we want to make sure that we teach the person to ask for help and possibly even how to employ those strategies himself or ask for a supervisor to do so. Ideally, we are able to provide the support in the environment and coach



the supervisor and the individual along the way, and set that up for success, right from the beginning. Difficulty communicating with coworkers is also when that comes up. And this may not just be with the individual with autism spectrum disorder. This could be really some difficulties that the coworker also has in communicating with that individual.

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:28:49](#)

So it can go both ways. And we want to make sure that we provide a real supportive and model a supportive environment, right from the beginning, and then identify coworkers that may be great to pair with the individual if possible, and, and try to flourish those relationships or germinate those relationships together so that when we're gone, there's additional supports that the individual can tap into. And if we have difficulty communicating with them, we need to start working on that, right from the beginning. Challenging behavior, I found this in an article and I thought it was really just a nice way to think about behavior a little bit differently. And I'm so used to studying behavior and analyzing it. And in the you most minute details that thinking of it in this way, when you're in a vocational placement, I thought would be a great way to coach everybody.

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:29:49](#)

Challenging behaviors are maladaptive ways of responding to inadequacies in the environment and due to the inability for us to either control our environment or our lack of socially adaptive skills that we can apply in those situations. I think that's a great example. These are new environments that people are unfamiliar with and it's going to lead to this environment. Doesn't support me like my other environments do. So those are inadequacies as well as I have. I have loss of control. I'm not familiar with what's going on. I don't get to perhaps direct my schedule the way that I did before. And so now I don't know if I can handle this. And then we run into possibly the challenging behaviors increasing because we haven't learned the way to adapt and to choose a different method that is considered socially acceptable in handling what's going on in the moment,

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:30:50](#)

Specifically

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:30:51](#)

Lists of challenging behaviors. These really focused on this page on the ones that we're probably all familiar with because we've been working with trying to reduce those over time. Since we





started with our kids, that we that we see and the first way that we look at it, I try to put it into three different categories would be the disruptive and interrupted behavior. So stereotypies self stimulatory behavior, ritualistic behavior, anything that's repetitive behavior and attention and non-response or withdrawal or avoidance. All of those things can either disrupt, you know, the task at hand and a person's ability to perform that task or interrupt the tasks that they're working on in the moment, dangerous behavior. This one would be one of the most serious, and also we've found one of the most difficult to find supports for when it comes to supported employment and having the different personnel available and resources and funding to make this possible self-injurious behavior aggression towards others and property destruction are the top three that employers are going to be concerned about.

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:32:01](#)

And then also the protest, either physical, protesting or vocal protesting can be a concern as well. In addition, we want to make sure things like this are what we are really educating the supervisors on so that they can learn more about autism symptoms, but also tailoring it to that individual that is going to start working there because every individual may have different strategies to work with the, the difficult behaviors and, or demonstrate behaviors differently than the next person, as you all know, other challenging behaviors. And this is what I was talking about a bit earlier, that goes beyond just the diagnostic criteria, sensory issues, you know, either seeking sensory input or avoiding sensory input. The loud noise is perhaps a discomfort when there's too many people in the room. And when you're too close in proximity or adjust the opposite, I have individuals who engage in sensory seeking behaviors so that they can you say a few words, someone's hair or smell their perfume.

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:33:08](#)

And those are going to be things that can impede or interrupt the workflow and certainly have an impact on their relationship with their coworkers. Lack of motivation, always a challenge with everyone, regardless of who you are, but lack of motivation with persons with autism spectrum disorders can be all the more difficult and trying to identify what will keep that person motivated and the work environment and or what will actually get them motivated to start in the work environment is going to be something that you're going to want. I look at



difficulty, self-regulating emotional responses. That's definitely like something that you'll want to take a look at, and if we can give them the strategies to do so, they'll be able to add for those breaks and take, you know, the 10 minutes or even count to 10 and do some breathing exercises, and that will help keep them in task and hopefully more successful, long term limited access to reinforcement.

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:34:06](#)

We know that in most environments, if you're really coming from the BCbA world or behavioral analytic world and, and teaching environments, there is typically some reinforcement program that you're applying with the individual with autism, and that can be multiple reinforcement strategies that are happening all at the same time, you know, simultaneously or in different environments. And when you go to work the reinforcement pretty much diminishes. So finding a way to prepare the individual, either through teaching and thinning out your reinforcement schedule and moving to more natural reinforcers is going to be something you want to look at as well as discussing with the employer. How can we create reinforcement opportunities for the individual so that we can hopefully guarantee success right from the beginning, and then fade that in it, as well as move it to natural supports. And then hopefully we won't need to count on those external reinforcement systems quite so much over time, low tolerance to change that flexibility or inflexibility that we run into in terms of following a schedule or a routine, if the tasks change on you unexpectedly, if there's a fire drill those sorts of things, we want to make sure that we're prepared for, because that may be a barrier to keeping employment, perhaps not necessarily getting the employment if employment is structured well from the beginning, but if it's changing ongoing, that can be pretty tough for the individuals that we work with.

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:35:40](#)

Poor environment similarities. This one is something that Peter Gearhart speaks a lot about. And I think if you have the opportunity, definitely take a look at his materials. He's got some fabulous strategies and insights into the adult population and helping them move into the community and become part of the community more often than they have been in the past. The similarities between environments, we may learn one skill here and then it's going to be different. Or the dissimilarities is really what we should be talking about here, going between home



and then work can have completely different rules and expectations. And so also the the materials that are available in something, even as simple as how the bathroom is set up, for example, in the home bathroom, perhaps you use a hand towel, but in the work environment and you have an air hand dryer, and that can, you know, cause some challenging behaviors as well.

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:36:37](#)

So be prepared for those and do your assessment and evaluation of the site, which we'll talk about a little bit later as well, right from the beginning so that you know exactly what you're walking into challenges with structuring independent work, any time that you have an, a task at hand, you're going to make sure that the individual understands the amount of time they have to complete that task. And then also that they can structure that into that work and do that on their own and go from point a to point C and complete that task without supports. But you will find that if you give a task just right from the beginning, without those supports upfront, that most of the individuals we work with and what the literature is showing is that they have a difficult time structuring that work independently and managing their time, difficulty managing change. I think that can also coincide with a low tolerance as well as difficulty with waiting and general, but also for the reinforcement. So again, look at your reinforcement structure, if it's not a natural naturally supported, you know, program that you're implementing, making sure that you move to a delayed reinforcement system that would be appropriate in a work environment,

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:38:00](#)

Executive functions. This one

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:38:03](#)

Is really truly important. And again, as I had said earlier, it's something that we tend to avoid in the beginning, because mostly, I would say we weren't familiar with it just even five years ago. We didn't talk too much about it. Or when we did talk about it, we, we thought that it was only for those with advanced cognitive skills and communication skills. When really we start working on executive functions in some of the tasks that we do naturally, right from the beginning of therapy. So something that you want to look at is just trying to understand what the different examples of skills are underneath what people consider executive functions. It's very hard to find a



consistent definition for what executive function is. And so that means that most people resort to giving you a list of skills that represent that it is an umbrella term.

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:38:58](#)

And what we can say is that according to the literature, it is a set of complex cognitive processes and sub-processes that interact with each other and it gets really complicated and, and, and it helps you achieve a specific goal. So it's also considered what you would say, your control center. One of the articles that I read sometime ago indicated that even though you may not be an executive in your job, you are always an executive when it comes to yourself. So we're talking about executive control and being able to manage all of the things around us and our responses to that, and be able to process some pretty complex situations to make good decisions in, in what we're going to do. Additional definitions are listed here that get a little bit more technical, and I've given you the website links as well. If you're interested executive functions based on what we know they are complex.

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:40:02](#)

It's not easy to define. And again, it's common for people to list them as skills. There is some interesting research out there that indicates through what they call functional neuroimaging that they've been able to identify changes in the brain can happen through teaching, which then helps executive functions recreate, or you can relearn them perhaps over time and what they call recover. So most of the work has been done with patients who have lost skills instead of perhaps patients with developmental disabilities who are still trying to attain those skills. But it's, it's really I think an exciting, an exciting topic to really think about because it tells you that it is possible with the right environment and the right, you know, perhaps repetition and teaching that's going to happen. You can build these skills in someone's repertoire. There are eight commonly identified executive functions, but I do list just a few that we talk about specifically related to a vocational placement. Being able to solve novel problems would be an executive skill, modifying our behavior in light of new information. That's provided generating strategies in the moment and sequencing complex actions, keeping track of time and meeting our deadlines, managing more than one task at a time asking for help or seeking more information when we need as well as engaging in group dynamics. All of those are definitely things you're going to see in



the work environment and want to be aware of and pretty much cross over into our communication skills and our social skills areas as well.

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:41:46](#)

Some comments

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:41:47](#)

Co-Occurring diagnoses to be aware of in people with autism who are in their adult ages. Sometimes you'll start seeing these things come up in adolescence as well, but something to be aware of, because when you are designing programs, you want to make sure that you're targeting the right items and that these co-occurring diagnoses don't actually create an additional barrier in terms of the person's success and the employment environment, intellectual disability, or cognitive difficulties, anxiety, depression, very common seizure disorder does increase as you get older, the likelihood anyway,

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:42:24](#)

A ticks, impulse

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:42:27](#)

Control disorder, as well as just organic disorders, which are typically ruled out or ruled in at a very young age. But again, something to be aware of, another barrier that we run into, and we've talked about how to do this successfully in our previous presentations around transition is the lack of preplanning and formal placement that takes place. There's typically a great deal of time needed in order to complete all of the components for someone to transition from education to the adult world, whether it be postsecondary education you know, community activities or the vocational environment. And so you need to make sure you have enough time to work on all the things necessary to make this successful. The studies do show, and we've said this before those first few years are absolutely crucial because they set up the person's future. And if it's not something that we've done well, right from the beginning, it is more likely they will not succeed later on

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:43:29](#)

On poor

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:43:32](#)

Transitions lead to poor outcomes. Planning should begin by age of 12. Often we don't see that. And that is something that we're trying to improve upon and also help educate the community on so that we can really start getting prepared the way that we should, based on what literature says is best





practice, vocational placements. Some of the things you're going to need to do as preparation is researching your local options, learning about the employer themselves, as well as meeting with those employees and supervisors over time, develop a relationship. Don't expect it to happen overnight and start, you know, really looking at what are the opportunities and the more you get to know each other, the more likely you'll make a better choice and find the right fit for your child. Also complete a site visit. That's one of the things we'll talk about later, identified job skills needed specific to that site, as well as identify any financial or service resources that may be needed for the person to successfully obtain and maintain the employment there overall be prepared.

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:44:36](#)

There are already gonna be a significant number of challenges that you may run into just naturally within the support system, within the job, within, you know, some of the skills that the individual still needs to learn. And so you don't want to add anything to it that you can prevent upfront, lack of early learning and practice. Again, going back to that time, the amount of time to get everything done in transition planning also impacts learning all the skills you need to get ready. So you need to consider strengths and deficits, assess for interest areas, as well as assess for the specific job skills or tasks that jobs have and what are needed. And if your individual that you work with or your child is able to perform those successfully already, I call it the three P's here is step by step. We need to pre-teach, we need to practice, and then we need to perform. And basically you simulate the environment that they're going to go into. That's your pre-teaching and you get all of the, the practice in, by doing multiple trials in order to, you know, achieve mastery. And then finally, you're going to achieve generalization in fluency when you're able to perform those tasks in the real environment at your job.

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:45:53](#)

Now that we've covered barriers, let's shift over to some of the vocational assessments that are common commonly used and what they should include based on what literature guides us in terms of best practice. One thing that we found in our practice is that the current vocational assessments aren't specifically dined, designed, excuse me, for people with autism spectrum disorders. And what we're learning is it's been really difficult to apply them and find good information or get good information



out of those assessments. They tend to be abstract. They involve reading, writing. Sometimes they ask the person to draw, and then you're supposed to interpret that drawing into something that's supposed to be a vocational tasks that they may be interested in often what we've had to do. And what the literature also indicates is that the vocational questionnaires that exist at the moment are usually then offered to the parent or the guardian or someone that knows the person really well and possibly multiple people in order to get the information that you're looking for.

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:46:57](#)

Questions that are typically asked are about the person's learning ability. What is their language ability? What's their communication ability, what's their behavior functioning. And also how are they doing in their daily living skills, independence, and what needs do they have in that area? Some better assessment options that are coming out and being discussed and even practiced are the hands on approach. That's where you're going to go in. And you're going to assess for the person's strengths assess employable skills that they may already have in their repertoire, and then do what we call a discovery. And that is go and look around in terms of what's available, even take the person with you so that they can try some of these things while they're in the real job environment and see how they respond. And then there are also theories of video, a video role play, video modeling, as well as someone being able to identify what they're interested in by watching videos, instead of perhaps a paper and pencil type assessment that are commonly used currently motivation and abilities assessment, while testing employment tasks.

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:48:10](#)

What you really want to look at in terms of a hands on approach is what are their motivations. And also you can test that in your contrived situations or in your simulations that you create and then go and test that in the true environment or the job site, but also one of the interesting theories that is being discussed, although I've not seen anything come out with it yet is using virtual reality to practice some of the things that may be available in the real work environment and see how they respond. So then you don't have the pressure of being really there with all of the people surrounding you and all of the other variables that you haven't yet prepared for, just because you're going through the discovery process.



Michelle LaMarc...: [00:48:53](#)

Here's a list of some things that literature and practice tells us. We absolutely need to assess for look at interests and strengths specific work skills. We've mentioned that several times, what is their learning style? That's going to be super important as you identify possible supports in the environment, communication skills, sensory issues also talked about need for structure and predictability. This is something that if you plan ahead and you work with the employer, you may be able to create a very successful and you know, commonly practiced, you know, set of tasks that will be done day to day. Following that specific schedule, that way the individual can predict what's coming physical and social environment. You need to take a look at that in the workplace. You know, what's going on in that workplace are, are the chairs too close and, you know, do we have a risk of them bumping into those chairs or do we have too many people in the room, or perhaps there's not enough access to, you know, the reinforcers that they do like that are already in the workplace could do. We just need to modify where they sit, where they work, things like that. And is that even possible in the environment that we're working with? So that's something that, again, if you, if you create those relationships over time, you are probably going to be more likely to find success in working with people who will include those modifications for the person that you work with.

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:50:23](#)

Here are some common vocational assessment tools that we've tried here at step-by-step. And again, I just kind of break it down for you in terms of if they're pencil, paper tests, what kind of reading level they require. And often with some of the consumers that we work with, even though they can perhaps, you know, write and read, we have also tried the last one on here, which is that picture interest career survey, thinking that perhaps we wouldn't have to worry so much about the complexity of the reading and the writing and using the pictures, because that should be an easier skill. And we found that that's really just as difficult and it doesn't seem to be concrete enough for the individuals that we work with, but these are the ones that are out there and you may want to take a look. They may work for your practice and also help you identify what is going to be great assessment or great vocational options for the individuals.



Michelle LaMarc...: [00:51:19](#)

Top skills needed for employment. You're not going to believe it, but we can actually narrow it down to four. I know that simplifying it way too much, but they need to absolutely be able to ask for help. They need to be able to ask for a break and they need to be able to tell someone when they don't understand a direction or task. And finally, they need to be able to utilize natural supports that are available in that environment, or that you can easily add into that environment, such as calendars, visual schedules, the phone timers, and those sorts of things. If you have these four areas covered, then you at least have a good starting chance, some ways to prepare and support. Let's take a look at this next section and what we're talking about here. There's several things. The first would be employment readiness and intervention types.

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:52:04](#)

These are going to be the common ones that are available probably in your community right now, and or things that you may be able to create following the specific models that have been tested in research so far, social and vocational support groups. We'll talk about vocational support programs. What's the difference between support groups and support programs, social and vocational skills training. Again, what's the difference there. Job site training and simulation training, and combining the two, a job club travel training, as well as employer and coworker training, social and vocational support groups. Typically these are conducted for persons who are 18 to 22 years old. We actually do these here at step by step, and they have been extremely successful and we've received fabulous feedback from both the parents and the individuals who attend. It's more appropriate for those who have minimal cognitive difficulties. Some of the tasks are definitely more difficult and require multiple steps that you need to follow as well as processing some abstract concepts.

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:53:07](#)

We've run those one hour per week. You'll see. This also is pretty common in the literature. And typically you'll, we'll run it as an eight to 12 week session. So we'll see them and we'll have a very focused curriculum that we're going to accomplish in that eight to 12 weeks. Of course, being somewhat flexible when you're in therapy, you to be prepared to work with what presents itself, but we have a set list of skills that we want to develop during that time relationship development. This is something that gives you a rare opportunity to actually start



practicing some of those relationship skills and starting to learn how to create a relationship. Where do you even begin? How do you talk to each other and what they found in terms of the studies that are out there is that what, what the individuals who participated said they are actually emailing and calling and they're maintaining those, those interactions outside of the group now.

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:53:59](#)

And part of that is probably because of all of the practice and, and that they had in the moment as well as it provided a safe environment. But the other thing is that most successful social and vocational support groups are going to have what they call reunions. And that means that they're going to schedule a one time a month reunion with the people who were in that group, and if they can make it fabulous, but that helps keep everyone connected. They also identified that people were now able to take others' perspective. More often, they indicated that they found more support and encouragement, and also they were able to generate or get ideas and help others by generating their own ideas when they were talking about challenging situations that they face. And what was really fabulous is that they stated they now have friendships, something they hadn't had prior.

Michelle LaMarc...: [00:54:56](#)

This is a specific vocational support program, which is a little bit different than just support groups. This is following the aspirations model, which was conducted in combination with Ohio state university, Ashley Hillier. I had the pleasure of actually participating with her in her program, not necessarily with an individual who was in the study, but we provided some vocational opportunities for some of the adults that she was working with. And it has some really great data behind it. And it may be something that you can create in your own city or, or location if it doesn't exist already. This was based on a two year vocational support program, and it was going to assess the impact on employment rates and, and income, as well as examined factors associated with employment among individuals, specifically with autism spectrum disorders, they were looking at job satisfaction and social integration in the workplace, as well as evaluations of employees on their job performance.





- Michelle LaMarc...: [00:55:57](#) The mean age of this study was 22 years and their IQ was 111. The aspirations model followed to really core concepts. They have the pre-placement services and they have the post-placement services that they incorporate. So we'll run through what the pre-placement services looked like. First, there was a parent interview. They're going to assess the communication skills, daily living, social cognitive and behavior skills that the individual has by talking with the parents. Then there was an individual interview with the person with autism spectrum disorder. And they're asking that person a little bit different questions, looking into their background and past experiences, as well as what are their interests. And then finally there was some training conducted. They didn't indicate, you know, overall how many weeks in particular, but they did say it was one hour a week. And it was more than one time. And they were able to then teach the individual how to get ready to get that job. So, number one, they have to be able to search for the job. They need to know how to do that. They need to also know how to write a resume or complete an application, and then also participate in an interview,
- Michelle LaMarc...: [00:57:09](#) Now
- Michelle LaMarc...: [00:57:09](#) Post-Placement services in this particular situation. What they start with first is identifying the potential employment opportunities. And then once they have those, the what they called, I believe the program coordinator in this study goes out to the site and completes a visit and an assessment during this assessment, they're looking at the work environment. They're, you know, meeting the coworkers, looking at the support systems that are already available, or maybe added in easily into that environment, as well as what the potential job tasks are going to be. Then they come back determine, is that going to be a good fit for this individual? If so, the formal placement is established. The program coordinator helps the individual by first attending work with them, right from the beginning, providing ongoing training on the job task in the moment, as well as providing additional training whenever necessary. So they can be called in periodically by the individual or the individual supervisor as well.
- Michelle LaMarc...: [00:58:10](#) The support range from four to 20 hours per week, pretty large difference there. And it is dependent upon each individual. Also



as part of their program, they provided information on autism spectrum disorders to all of the coworkers and supervisors that were part of that placement. And finally there were followups and additional supports that were provided whenever needed. So it wasn't as if they just reached mastery and then the supports ended. It allowed them to check up, make sure things were going well. And then when they weren't stepping in, when necessary, here are their results, which are pretty astonishing, employment levels increased 78% income levels. Prior to this intervention, each of the individuals were making while a mean of \$1 and 60 cents per hour, and now post intervention, they were making \$7 and 10 cents per hour. This is an increase of over 443% hours worked. The main number of hours worked per week was 17.11 and then job retention also increased seven of the nine employees that were part of the actual study, worked on an average 12 and a half months for six of them.

Michelle LaMarc...:

[00:59:25](#)

It was their first paid job, the length of time that it took to find the right placement. This is also something to keep in mind when you're preparing for transition. It was four and a half months. So again, plan accordingly the job placements. Typically they were entry level positions, food service, retail, clerical, those sorts of things. And also like we did here, where we provided the opportunity to work on areas of strength, say perhaps in the administrative office, or even with some of the landscaping and gardening, those sorts of things, implications that you can take away from the results of this study. What they're, what they're really trying to let all of us know is that it's pretty clear. There needs to be an emphasis on preparing people with the vocational skills needed, right from the beginning. Don't wait, start when they're younger, do it before high school graduation, in order to make sure that you have a higher likelihood of success, the benefits, of course, these probably make common sense, but what they were able to identify as that it enhances awareness and understanding of employment in general, it increases the social integration and the impact that their behaviors have on others.

Michelle LaMarc...:

[01:00:42](#)

So when we're talking about the individual in particular, and then it also gives them a greater opportunity to build their social networks and relationships, all right, social and vocational skills training, this would be another area that we would want to employ. If we're going to try to prepare someone, did, you



know, persons with severe disabilities represent less than 10% of the workforce in supported employment, definitely social and vocational skills training. Again, each of these methods come back to the same thing. It should occur in high school. And then also after high school, while you're in the job site, ongoing, perhaps if needed need to target specific social skills that are going to be needed in that employment environment, as well as the specific vocational skills that are needed based on hopefully an interest assessment that's done first, some site assessments identifying what's available in terms of options for employment, and what do they look like inside?

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:01:46](#)

What are the job skills required? And then you can take it back and do your skills assessment pretty much the same across all the board. Now this one was another great method. And what they found was doing both job site training and simulation training was actually if combined much more successful in this study in 2006, they were able to demonstrate again, that it provides just as much support as say a vocational support program model, if not more support to people with autism spectrum disorders, for teaching the job skills. And so when you look at job site training, this is what it means. Trainings provided by a job coach to the employee. It's at the work site. It's typically one time per day for a designated amount of time. And the focus is on fading. The prompts until mastery criteria is reached where job site simulation training and the difference between it, it means it still includes the job site training, which is on the work site or in the real environment. But it also includes simulation training in say an education site where you can simulate what they're going to experience in the work environment, help them learn those skills in that, you know less pressured environment, more supportive. You can employ some reinforcement procedures, those sorts of things that we've found to be effective in behavior analysis, and then be able to see the improved results when they're actually at the job.

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:03:22](#)

So the studies show that the combination of both will enhance the quality of work. It also led participants to demonstrate a higher rate of acquisition, and it provided them again, a greater opportunity to develop necessary skills for their employment. So training in the natural environment paired with this simulation training has been really shown to be more effective



than just training on the job site alone through perhaps a vocational support program, only

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:03:52](#)

Other supports that may be available would be a job club. And this group is a little bit different than any of the other social or vocational support groups that exist out there. And that it's run by the individuals themselves. They typically meet once a week and the individuals talk about, you know, different ideas and tips and try to support each other as best they can. And they find that to be really beneficial travel training. This is something that is also an area to look at when you're preparing for vocational and community placement and moving to the adult world. And that is learning all the rules of public transportation, or perhaps even driving. How do you get from point A to point B, how are you going to get to work every day, making sure that you understand what appropriate behavior is expected and what public transportation advocate is,

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:04:43](#)

Employer supports. This is another area that we look at, and here's some tips that, you know, are offered, which we'll actually cover from specific studies later on that we'll hone in on what the supervisors and job coaches may need, but overall, we need to support the employer. First. We need to support them with outside staff, meaning bringing in your job, coaches, bring in your service coordinators and your program coordinators and your social workers educate the group about the person that's, you know, coming in and going to start working with them, but educate them about the diagnosis. And some of the things they can expect, social skill training with the coworkers. Many times the coworkers, if they've not had experience with people with autism or even other disabilities, they may not be comfortable, the skill set to interact and understand about eye contact, expectations and proximity, and some things like that.

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:05:40](#)

So making sure that we're providing the same sort of training and upfront information to the coworkers can also set yourself up for success, communication training with the supervisor. When we go and talk about the supervisor tips and recommendations. Communication is a big part of that. So definitely doing some specific communication training with the supervisor based on the individual's needs, environmental supports, take a look at assess and see which ones already exist, which ones might we be able to create? You're going to see a lot



of the same themes coming throughout, regardless of what model you follow. And then also try to establish prescheduled followups and training so that they're already in the books, making sure that nobody's left behind. And now when people do have questions, they'll be able to better plan and say, Oh, I'm going to see you next week, or they'll know if this is an emergency. I really do need to call you now. And I know you can come in and do a followup with me.

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:06:38](#)

Something else that is important to know is job placement. One of the studies that, that I researched sometime ago. And then again recently is just looking at what is going to be a predictor of success for the transitions that our adolescent and young adults are experiencing right now. And what they find in the studies is that if you're going to look at predictors in terms of successful transition into employment and the amount of money that they are able to earn and the number of hours that they're able to work per week, that was what they were looking at first and foremost. But then it also looked at the different demographics and the vocational services that were available to help them perform to their best of their ability in those vocational placements. And what they found in terms of their results is that providing a formal job placement is the best predictor and finding employment overall.

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:07:35](#)

So if we are not there providing the supports upfront to locate, do the research, do the testing and, and identifying what the best placement is so that we can formally establish that job placement is less likely that the person with autism spectrum disorder will either find a job and obtain that employment. And if they do it is less likely that they'll make a, a more improved rate and wage where it would be more of a real life wage that others are making that don't have disabilities. And so what they also found was that the highest rates of pay were correlated to those who went on college and also received any sort of postsecondary education.

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:08:20](#)

So, job placements super important in all of the components of this transition. Now we're going to look at intervention and employment strategies, and also the choices that are out there. Typically this would be how they were best described or identified and labeled. We have competitive employment, customized employment, supported employment with job





coaching, something that's called micro enterprise. If you're not familiar with that, as well as sheltered workshops. And then we'll look at some specific employment readiness interventions and take a look at those and how they relate to these different environments here, based on what we've already talked about, a competitive employment situation, here's the benefits we narrow it all down. It seems it's seen as, as more typical it's mainstream, there are more job choices. Of course, if you're going to look in a competitive environment, so you have more opportunities and it gives you an ability to interact with other coworkers, the challenges, however, is that sometimes in a competitive environment supports aren't allowed, or they're difficult to establish. And also you're not always able to make those modifications that may help the individual be more successful. And it does require a higher level of understanding of social rules and behavior expectations.

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:09:45](#)

Some findings from some studies specifically this one in 2005, when you look at competitive employment for people with autism are that number one to determine what supports a person with autism is going to need on the job. And to make sure that those things are going to be put into place, that's going to be things like communication devices or visual reminders. And so you need to take a look at that and whether the competitive environment is going to allow that to happen. Also, you need to find a balance with regards to the amount of support that you do provide not too little, not too much, make sure you don't create a prompt dependency, make sure you're fading at a good schedule. And again, making sure that even those supports are going to be allowed in that vocational placement, customized employment. This is one that we're more familiar with in our practice.

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:10:35](#)

And the benefits here are that the job is then created or modified in order to best suit the individual with autism that we're, that we're supporting. And so instead of expecting them to conform to maybe all of the job expectations and, or perhaps the timelines that, that a task needs to be completed in, we look at specific modifications that can be made in order to make them more successful, but still create a benefit for the employer. It opens up many possibilities. When you have employers who are willing to customize the job tasks to fit the individual. And this allows us also to use their and their



interests, perhaps not always, but definitely it allows us to focus on the areas of strength that they have in their repertoire, and try to apply those in this in this setting challenges, some companies aren't open to this option and what we find and hence my, my hesitation in talking about interests is that sometimes the interests that our individuals have are not commonly found in the workplace.

Michelle LaMarc...:

[01:11:39](#)

So it may not be a good match with the company that is willing to allow customized employment. Some things to know about customized employment is this is where vocational services seems to be moving in the future. And what literature is, is guiding us to sometimes this type of employment will also allow individuals who are now currently considered unemployable to obtain a job, as well as some things you need to know. It does take a long time typically to find the right job. And it brings me back to our topic that we talked about earlier about discovery and learning about all the steps in a discovery process and employing that as, as a support provider so that you can really find that, that good match vocational rehabilitation services have been found to also be helpful in this area. And they may have the ability to assist with you know, different equipment or like communication devices and things like that, that the person may be more successful with as well as provide the specific supports and job coaching and things like that in the employment location supported employment with job coaching.

Michelle LaMarc...:

[01:12:56](#)

This is a little bit different. And what does this mean? This means individuals are given on the job support and really were no, or minimal minimal, excuse me, modifications are made in the job duties. The results are it's been shown to dramatically increase longterm success for persons with autism and disabilities benefits include the individual receives on the job assistance and training right there in the moment. It allows people to work in jobs settings that may have been inaccessible to them again. Now they can have a job that perhaps they weren't able to in the past, and the coaching role can sometimes be transferred over to say coworkers who are willing to be paired or become a model or mentor for the individual and or the supervisors and evidence-based support employment. There are specific things you need to know about the goal is that it's competitive employment wages should be equivalent.



- Michelle LaMarc...: [01:13:53](#) So it doesn't matter if you have a disability or not. We should be getting paid the same for the same work that we're doing. And the pace is determined by the client, not the professionals, a client also meets with an employment specialist upfront discuss those, their preferences, their skills, and their experiences. And, and that specialist will meet with the entire treatment team in order to determine what mental health supports and treatment need to still maintain or be established and coordinate all of that for the individual. And then support continues for as long as the client feels is necessary.
- Michelle LaMarc...: [01:14:30](#) Some other components of
- Michelle LaMarc...: [01:14:31](#) Supported employment, some of the literature was able to, you know, really help define for us and give us a list of things to look at when we're preparing for all of our support staff to, to go out there. And there were 15 critical components that were identified in evidence-based supported employment. I'll just run through them very quickly. Caseload size, vocational services, staff, vocational, generalists integration of rehabilitation with mental health treatment, looking at the vocational unit, a zero exclusion criteria, as well as ongoing work-based vocational assessment, rapid search for competitive jobs, individualized job search, taking a look at the diversity of jobs that you're, you're looking for as well as the permanence of jobs and jobs as part of a transition follow along supports that are needed community based services that will also help support the individual and assertive engagement and outreach. So that the individual is to the best of our ability supported in this environment.
- Michelle LaMarc...: [01:15:36](#) Some success strategies, job placement. I put this down into three different areas. We have job placement work tasks, and then the actual job support and job placement when we're trying to find the right place, make sure it is the right place. Also make sure that you are taking the data that you're gathering in terms of what the individual's skill sets are and their interests, their strengths, and also their challenges in order to determine what the right placement is. So this is part of that discovery process. Then look at the work tasks themselves. Are they clearly defined? Are they broken down? Does it allow the individual to use whatever tools they may need in order to be successful, a visual schedule, a calendar, perhaps programmed reminders or timers. Some of the things we've mentioned



earlier, and then also job support, make sure it's more at first in order to ensure success and then fade that gradually. Other Supported employment success strategies are supervisors and coworkers support.

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:16:36](#)

Again, that education up front, sometimes that social skills training and communication training, we'll be able to help achieve getting the whole team on board with the support that's going to be provided. And this job placement for the individual with autism, understand their coworker with autism, make sure that they know the specifics, you know, the idiosyncratic behaviors perhaps, and also help them identify that they may have idiosyncratic behaviors in their own repertoire, how we're similar as well. This can lead to great natural support. So then when we're not available to support them as a professional or practitioner, they have other people to turn to. And perhaps again, going back to my other example, having a coworker, who's going to be willing to be a mentor or a model for this person, a safe place for the person to go to and ask questions also appropriate and thorough on the job training.

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:17:29](#)

Make sure you include whatever accommodations may help best, but make sure you're also including the longterm support, make sure you're ready. And you know, that longterm support may be necessary and look at the resources that you have and, and plan those out accordingly, talk to the supervisors and make sure that they know that this is likely if that's the case understand right up front, that this may be needed. And if we can do this in the most successful manner, we'll do it as a combination of natural supports as well as external supports that we may bring in as practitioners and ideally transition those skills over to the natural support environment so that it can be maintained. And we can fade. Here's some specific tips for a job coach help the person you're supporting look for those natural supports. So you may need to identify what exists in the environment right away, and then employ those immediately.

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:18:23](#)

Look for ways that the person can be independent, practice the skills repeatedly. They need high repetition. In many cases, create a job portfolio, identify all the things that they're good at, and then identify how those things can be applied in the tasks that either they're doing or tasks that they may have the opportunity to do in that placement recognize the person's



strengths and let them know, make sure you identify and provide the reinforcers for them obviously. And ideally, we want to transition to natural reinforcement if possible, and make sure the environment can support it, perhaps tying it or pairing it with a paycheck, pairing it with a break. And those sorts of things will allow us to, you know, thin that reinforcement schedule more quickly and, or remove it over time. Here are some challenges, a job coach may find, and the coach is supposed to fade out gradually that may be tough.

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:19:18](#)

Many people are going to need ongoing support at different levels. And many job coaches currently are not trained to handle the problem. Behavior aggression towards self or others is one of those avoidance escape. Those are things that we need to talk about up front and make sure that they have the strategies in their own toolbox in order to employ them. While, they're supporting the individual in the job setting. Sometimes also a challenge is that having a job coach in and of itself can be considered a stigma. And, and we need to really try to just use our education strategies in order to change that perception, both for the individual, as well as those around them. Another area under supported employment. And this is a specific type is called individual placement and support or IPS. This is where clients' families and providers are going to you know, prefer this method because what it allows us to do is create supports and individual placements really that are specific to the person and their interests and their needs in a lot of this, again, crosses over.

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:20:31](#)

So the rates of competitive employment they've found have shown to be higher for clients assigned to this model versus other rehabilitation models that are out there during support employment research has also shown that clients do not experience the same negative consequences when they're part of this program. And it shows that they have improved self esteem and a reduction of symptoms in IPS. Most clients begin with part time employment. And then we've also learned based on the assessments and questionnaires that have been done in the literature that most clients are satisfied when the jobs are consistent with their preferences, make sense. Motivation is an issue. Interests are an issue. Strengths are an issue. Those three things that's going to make you more successful. If the job can support those, typically all something to know. And it kind of



goes along with some of the other findings that the studies have shown where it takes many months perhaps to find the right placement four and a half months, I think was one of the studies it's going to take multiple tries. You're going to have to try several different jobs before you actually find the one that fits all of the needs or the majority of the needs of the individual.

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:21:43](#)

Here's a review of best practice of supported employment and evidence-based support employment. We've talked about a lot of things now, but it includes the following six principles. And this is something that you can always come back to as an easy cheat sheet. The client determines eligibility support employment is then integrated with mental health treatment as well. And a competitive employment opportunity is the goal. So searching for a job needs to begin and be done quickly, job needs the jobs actually need to fit the individual based on their interests, their preferences, and their motivations and their strengths and their abilities that are already in their repertoire and also follow along and supports, or they're not they're not time limited. This may be an ongoing process and we may have to step in here and there as needed moving onto the micro enterprise. This one isn't seen quite as often, but what is it?

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:22:42](#)

It's an individual who owns their own company, but they try to participate at whatever level and the highest level that they can across all of the areas that are needed in terms of making that company successful. So they're going to participate in all of the marketing setting up the business, maybe even the daily operations of the business, as much as they can. This also gives them an opportunity to get support employees there who may support them either as a job coach and as well as having support employees who are hired in order to be mentors and help this process become more successful. An example here from the U.S. News and world report is pop and Joe's kettlecorn. So we encourage you to take a look at this. It's a 23 year old, small businessman. He had a goal of \$100,000 in sales by 2012, and he has autism and down syndrome and is also nonverbal, but this is actually turning out to be a great success for him. So we encourage you to take,

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:23:39](#)

Take a look





Michelle LaMarc...: [01:23:42](#)

Benefits of a micro enterprise. Individuals have capital it's more prestigious in the community, and it allows a person to actually pursue their own interests. But the challenge is sometimes their interests aren't necessarily marketable as a business. And there's the possibility of failure. It's a huge amount of work in order to own your own business. And that may be too much for really any individual to handle. And depends, I suppose, really. And what we find is it depends on the support structure that's, that's around them. One of the notes that we've read in the literature is making sure don't jump right to the micro enterprise option, just because you're trying to base it on a person's interests. It may not be the best option, you know of employment for the individual that you are working with, but it doesn't mean you shouldn't look at it if the if all the pieces fit and there is a way to create this successful environment and you have the support structures available to you and the individual in order to make it successful.

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:24:45](#)

And again, we say, just look at poppin, Joe, a study on micro enterprises taught us that being involved in a micro enterprise, it seemed to actually improve the quality of life for a significant portion of the sample that were, that were asked in this outcome evaluation back in 2010 and support workers even reported an increase in their own quality of work life and said that it was, it was much better than it was before and that they had more purpose or felt like this was a job that they loved coming to every day. Authors also found that micro enterprise could be an alternative to the day support programs and the sheltered workshops for some of the individuals, which is probably the more common placements that we see in our own communities. In addition, one thing to know is that there are often funding options through, you know, state government, federal government for small business in order to get startup costs covered as well as services that they can get through vocational rehabilitation or even Medicaid.

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:25:54](#)

Now the sheltered workshop, this is one of the longer existing options that we have. And this option may not be the best choice, many individuals in the sense that many people think that this is going to be possibly stifling for, for individuals with autism. Parents are trying to move away from this. As we saw, even the literature is leading us to the vocational support programs and support groups and, and customized employment



in those areas as well. And so when we look at this often the ones that are available, they are local they're well set up. And typically it's a, it's a host of different activities that the person can participate in and possibly earn a living wage. However, most of the time the wages are much lower than what other people would be making in a different position or a vocational place.

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:26:51](#)

And then it does offer the, I guess, the option to move away from actually the finding a good job. I mean, in terms of what we get in terms of feedback in our practice, let me be clear. A lot of the parents would like to find something that their child is specifically interested in something that is going to make every day count and that they're going to want to get up and go to and transition to well and successfully. And what they find in some of the sheltered workshops is that the activities are very limited in, in terms of the scope and, and opportunities and different skills that they work on. Although they can be very successful and a lot of parents like them in another sense, because there's usually a lot more supervision available as well as it's a safe environment.

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:27:46](#)

They, like I said, they've been around a long time. The staff are well trained. And so there are some positives to that as well, but often most families are communicating to us that they would like to look at things that are more customized and individual to their child and trying to find that in the community. And again, that's going to take a lot more prep on the upfront versus finding the shelter workshops or the vocational rehabilitation programs that are already well established in your community. That may not be the best fitting in terms of interests, but offer many, many other positive components to it in order to make your child successful.

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:28:30](#)

Okay. Some critical strategies for employment success. Here are some things that we found both in our own practice and in the literature that will help any person with autism spectrum disorders or most people I should say with autism, spectrum disorders become more successful in their employment position, maintain a consistent schedule. So try to avoid the unexpected and also maintain a consistent set of job responsibilities. What we found is in our situations and, and experience is that anytime that things are changing and it's not



a skill that they already have in their repertoire. Now we have increased challenging behaviors. We have decrease in, in positive communication attempts. And now we ended up calling back in for additional support. So get all of that information up front. If that happens frequently, make sure we know about it, make sure we're preparing for it. And teaching flexibility up front, otherwise try to maintain a consistent set and a consistent schedule of the job tasks that they're going to be performing on a day to day basis try to reduce the amount of unstructured time or downtime that they can just engage themselves in with other activities that are not work related. What we find here is you'll see an increase in possibly the challenging behaviors. I would say specifically in our experience, we see more of the disruptive or the interfering behaviors. Like the ritualistic behaviors may increase some of the you know, avoidance or wandering and really just inappropriate interactions or not really knowing how to interact with their coworkers. So then they become disruptive to others who are trying to accomplish their jobs as well. So reduce that amount and make sure that as much of the time that they're there, that you're structuring it and following a schedule and preparing and having these job tasks available. So that, again, it's predictable, it's consistent as much as possible, directly communicate with the employee.

Michelle LaMarc...:

[01:30:36](#)

And this is really going to the supervisors. We want to make sure that they're comfortable communicating with the employee and that they have the strategies in their own back pocket that they can employ when communicating. So they should already be familiar with say reducing the amount of language that's used in a directive, perhaps repeating the direction more than once asking the person if they understand even following up with the person. So that direct communication is going to be one of the critical areas that the supervisors are going to have to be number one, willing to do, and also good at doing and get familiar with working with that individual at their own level and need. And this really isn't too different than any other supervisor, a situation in the sense that anytime that you supervise a group of employees, not everybody has the same, you know, communication abilities or strengths, or they don't always perform the same. And so you have to learn to adapt to the individual in order to have a more



successful employee and increase job performance in most cases. Certainly there are going to be basic rules consistencies, again, that are expected, but learning how to communicate with each and every one is really no different than learning how to communicate with a person with autism spectrum disorder, provide reminders and reassurance that reinforcement going to be really important. And sometimes the reassurance isn't going to be enough. So you're going to have to look at some of the external or, or you know, really added reinforcement systems that that will create a more successful environment, especially on the upfront, because the natural reinforcement of you just providing that range, reassurance or praise may not be strong enough to really make an impact. So consider that, but the reminders can always be helpful. Think about how you provide the reminders as well. Should it be in a written format?

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:32:34](#)

Should it be frequent? You know, how frequently should it be and should it be you know, perhaps repeated multiple times and then you come back after 10 minutes or you can actually wait and send it in a, in a memo or an email or something like that. So think about their different abilities and successful ways of communication. Because sometimes if it's in a written format, you don't have them, the social component that has to take place. Also, you have the ability to go back and reference it as the individual with autism and yourself in terms of making sure you know exactly what directives you gave and making sure that they have basically a checklist to follow. So think about those reminders and the different ways that you can manipulate, how you give those reminders to make the person more successful, use organizers, to structure the job tasks.

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:33:26](#)

This definitely is helpful when you're talking about working with several different materials and making sure they know where to find things they're well labeled. They're in the same location, perhaps they're in a specific sequence that helps them perform that job well, and that will give them then the opportunity to do that more independently and hopefully need less reminders over time. So make sure that you look at the structure of the environment and the organization of the actual components of that job task. And if you're not sure how to do that, try to complete a task analysis in order to identify each of those steps, all of the materials needed. And what do I do if I'm out of a material, make sure that you start to prepare those



communication skills and the individual with autism, and that will give them again a higher independence level and allow you to step away more, more often, or for longer durations without having to check in and increasing their self esteem in the process because they become more independent and successful help reduce the social demands of the job.

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:34:32](#)

There are a lot of ways to do this. Think about the lunch room, think about breaks. Think about even just the common, you know niceties that we, we, we do when we say hello, how are you doing today? How was your weekend? And we're you know, how are your kids, those sorts of things, try to define areas that the person is interested in number one. So if there is something that the person has an interest in, say a hobby or something of that sort, make sure that you're trying to tap into those areas when you are engaging in those social moments. And it isn't work-related, but also try to reduce the amount of social demands that are placed or expectations if necessary, meaning we don't have to greet everyone in the entire office, but, you know, we'll greet the person that ends up standing in front of us, or we're passing in the hallway, look at those different social rules and try to pick out the priorities saying hi isn't necessarily going to be the most important part of the day in order to get your job done.

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:35:34](#)

But it is something that we can work on and work toward over a period of time, the lunch room, that example, or the break room, any of those areas, it may be that you want to schedule lunch at a different time, so that there aren't quite so many employees in the same space, and that will reduce, say the level of noise or just the amount of bodies that are in the room. If you've identified and learned that the individual may have some sensitivities to the noise level and the busy-ness. So keep that in mind as well. Maybe even in certain situations, we've found that we find an alternative location for the person to have lunch because they prefer to have lunch on their own. And then they come back and then they engage you know, socially just for small amounts of time as appropriate, but then they are more successful in their job tasks and completing those because they stay focused on the job in general, and we're not having to test some of the more difficult areas for them.



Michelle LaMarc...: [01:36:34](#)

So we try to take those things into consideration. Other things that we do in terms of reducing the social demands, again, goes back to the directives and looking at the number of steps it takes to complete a task. How many people do you have to talk to in order to complete that task? So if you have to go from one department to the next to the next, that may be something that you want to look at reducing or eliminating altogether. So there's only one point person that that person can go to and has a safe place. And perhaps that person is someone who is really open to the idea of mentoring and supporting and being available for questions. So you can kind of manipulate your environment hopefully in a successful manner for everyone that does bring up another area though, that sometimes coworkers are uncomfortable because anytime you make those modifications for the person with autism, now that may require modifications in their original job duties.

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:37:27](#)

So keep that in mind as a supervisor, when you're setting up these infrastructures and processes. One of the things that we did here very successfully is we tried to find opportunities that were already prebuilt into the schedule for the individual to take their breaks access email. We looked at what their motivators were, and then what we found was the less supervision we provided, the less that he actually accomplished on the job. And so his productivity went down. And so we had to put in place, you know, different reinforcement systems, different levels of prompts. And we even found individuals that he interacted with very, very well in our company and in the administrative building. And then we paired those people with him and found projects that he was more successful with. So we were also adapting the job tasks as we learned more about him. And as he learned more about his own interests and abilities, when we first started with copying, that was something that he was very good at.

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:38:23](#)

And then it turns out that became boring to him and he just didn't want to do it anymore. So he would avoid it at all costs. And that's when we would find him on the computer and jumping on Facebook and email and those sorts of things in order to, you know, get stimulation in another way. So, you know, keep those things in mind. And remember you have to do that ongoing assessment in order to make sure that they're more successful. So one of the other critical strategies is





modifications for the employee with autism again, cause modifications for the, the other employees and their possible job duties. So again, model the, the mentality that you want everyone to embrace and the work environment that you want them to be part of. So if you, as a supervisor on modeling that you may then get additional buy in from other staff, but also be open to their concerns, give them the, the opportunity first and foremost, make sure they know that it's safe to come and tell you.

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:39:20](#)

And there won't be any repercussions if they're uncomfortable with something. So keep those things in mind in terms of trying to establish really successful employment opportunities for people with autism spectrum disorders, here are some things that you can use to train supervisors specifically to be successful. And this comes straight out of some literature that conducted a this, this study conducted a whole host of questionnaires across multiple supervisors. And these are the techniques that they found to be the most successful, as well as questioning the individual who was employed. And those who were supporting that individual, a primary technique that's used by supervisors includes being direct in their communication, giving specific reminders, again, not changing their language, putting it in writing, making sure that it's consistent in that you're able to help support the person by choosing specific words to use in your communication.

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:40:23](#)

Also, they use specific techniques to verify that the communication was understood. This was another area. And what we had was some examples of having an employee repeat the instructions back to the individual that gave the directive. Perhaps the employee then also had to demonstrate, you know, at least the beginning of that in order to show that they understood what was going on. We also had them do some things here, at least in our own practice, where if we gave a directive, we made sure that they were checking in and we gave them, you know, check in points on where they were in the list of tasks or the sequence to complete the task. And so we had check-in points and that was a way for them to come and report and self report, how they were doing and, or have the supervisor go in and check and see how they were doing so that we could better support them.



Michelle LaMarc...: [01:41:15](#)

And then we faded that the the frequency of the check-in's and we increased the duration and those sorts of things to make it more natural, but trying to find ways to make sure that **NES**, you know, the employee really doesn't understand the task and that if they don't, again, go back to one of the very beginning skills that you have to think about, and that is, can they ask for help? Can they ask for clarification or further explanation? And often what you find is they'll say yes in the moment, at least in our experience. And then they run into a problem when they're actually executing the different tasks that are in that task analysis. And that's where we ended up finding our, our breaking point in terms of, we find that they've gone off, they start to avoid perhaps the, you know, they find something else to do like the computer example and getting on Facebook and email, like I mentioned earlier, and it really wasn't because they were not able to complete the task, but in that moment, something went wrong with the sequence and the directions that we gave.

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:42:20](#)

And they didn't know how to ask for either further clarification or for you to repeat the directions again, or how to, you know, get help in terms of trying to be able to navigate and change in the moment. So going back to one of the things in our executive skills, being able to manage our behavior based on new information. And that's one of those areas that you really want to look at instructions are also given on how to read a particular social cue or how to follow specific social rules. Now, social cues and social rules. We mentioned, you know, the hidden curriculum some others perspective type programming and, and strategies as well as studying theory of mind. And when we talk about those things, it's really from a general sense when we're doing social skills trainings, typically in our group sessions or in our education environments, or even our therapy environments that that we may do here at step-by-step.

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:43:19](#)

And what we find is that there was very little carry over into the real world examples. So we do suggest in terms of the supported employment and the more successful employment situations is to have someone go in there and assess the different social skills that are specific to that environment and learn how everybody communicates with each other. And what are some of the cues that they use? What are some of the unspoken rules that exist in the office? Do you know? You know



that when you go over to the water cooler, you're never to do this, or you are always to do this. You should always greet so-and-so because that's the receptionist at the front door. So make sure, again, you look at the environment that you're sending the person into and identify what are the list of social cues that are commonly used. You can even interview the supervisors and the potential coworkers that the individual will be interacting with, find out what they do find out whatever slang they use, any acronyms they use. There's a lot of times that we find in our day to day practice, when we have individuals working here with us that will say things, and we just assume they know what we're talking about and we'll use an acronym or you know, some

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:44:34](#)

Sort of just

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:44:37](#)

Almost like a half explanation. It's not very clear, you know, we'll say, go check the back room. Okay, well, which back room there's three or four back rooms. So again, looking at how they communicate internally and making sure that you develop either a list of rules for them to learn and practice, perhaps maybe you even identify with the supervisor, how to better clarify what's going on. So there aren't so many abstract social interactions that the person is faced with throughout the day until they really learn the environment, or we identified, these are the ones that we're going to teach. So take a look at those different things that occur in that particular environment. Reminders are also given. This would be one of the things that the supervisors identified right up front, that whenever they're providing reminders, that they have to make sure to speak slowly, they need to be able to pay attention to the job in particular.

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:45:35](#)

And they also need to make sure that the person is allowed to take time for breaks. So again, I talked about going to a prescheduled format, perhaps some things that you can do is use that as a reinforcer as well. It doesn't always work to your advantage. We had an example here for one of the individuals that we had provided a job placement for. And there were many variables that came into play in this situation. One of them was the difficulty in communicating when he had a question, as well as I would say really the training of the staff that were interacting with him through the daily tasks that he



was working on. And one of his reinforcers was a diet Coke, and he absolutely loved taking a break and having his diet Coke. So this was something that was put into the schedule.

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:46:24](#)

And he knew if he completed the tasks, you know, one through four, whatever it was at the time that then he would get his break with his diet Coke. Unfortunately, the schedule was way too thin and the delay and reinforcement on particular days, depending upon how he came in was not going to work for him. And so what we had to learn through those interactions, because he got very upset one day and actually left one of his tasks and took one of his diet Cokes and he put it in the middle of the floor and he stomped on it until it exploded. And, you know, we saw that as a way to communicate to us that we were withholding this diet Coke and, you know, if he can't have it, then nobody can. And those sorts of things. So when we really did a functional analysis around it, we learned that there were precursors to what happened that day.

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:47:13](#)

And it all had to do with things that happen even before he got to work that day. So we built in time for him to talk to a supervisor upon arrival, making sure that we were checking in with him and identifying if there was anything, you know, extraneous going on so that we were prepared for it. We could coach in the moment and then talk about the schedule. And we even then moved the schedule to his control. One of the things that I think we forget is that as long as the task gets done and it gets done in the timeframe that we need, I don't know that I necessarily mind if it's done in a different order or perhaps one thing is done in the morning that might have usually been scheduled in the afternoon, as long as it doesn't impact too many other things.

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:47:58](#)

And it still allows our company to function by all means. I think you can have control over your schedule. So what we were able to do was identify that he needed more than one Coke break, and we built multiple diet Coke breaks in there based on the difficulty of tasks that was provided to him in that day. We tried to make sure based on his need for really the consistency and the schedule that they were tasks, that number one he enjoyed. And what we found was some of the tasks that were on his list. He did not enjoy. And fortunately, in an administrative environment, we have so many things that we could use help



with that. We were able to go back in and assess what are his interests. And we did that in a much more thorough manner than we had done prior as employers.

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:48:45](#)

And because employers, aren't typically the ones who are going to do that analysis, it's usually the person who places them that supported program supporter or program coordinator, service coordinator, those individuals that we mentioned earlier, and that wasn't really relayed very well. So the communication between employer and the support system, as well as employer and the individual and the entire, just the entire thing. Again, there are many variables as I mentioned, but it just gives you an idea that even if you preschedule things and you use some of these strategies, they don't always work for every single person and make sure that you do an individual assessment of that, of that situation and that person that you're working with to identify how you can make it more successful. Once we give him control back to his schedule, we found that we had a decrease in challenging behaviors and frustration that he was expressing. He seemed happier at work. He didn't miss work quite so often. And we found that he started to, you know, initiate coming to work more often than he had done in the past. So strategies are great. It just doesn't work with everyone. And you may have to play around and identify and try different things based on what you're seeing and what data you're being provided by the individual.

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:50:01](#)

Other recommendations for supervisors, employers should provide employees with autism job tryout opportunities. This is kind of tough to do in the real word world environment, excuse me. But I have found that over time as we've established relationships with different you know, job placements in the community, that we are able to really explore some of the different jobs that are within that that particular company, such as the example that I had just given with the young man that we were working with we have so many things that can be done that can be helpful. And by giving him the opportunity to try out different jobs than tasks that helped increase his performance increase really his

Speaker 8: [01:50:50](#)

You could see it, you could just see it that it increased, you know, his self esteem. And at least that's what we assume. I know that's very hard to say as a behavior analyst, but he



seemed happier. And again, in very similar to the young man with a diet Coke, both of these young men that we were working with, they started to come to work more often, their productivity increased and those sorts of things, because we gave them the option of trying things until we found what we liked and what he was very good at and the things that he may have liked. And wasn't so good at them. We were able to provide the appropriate supports and identify if we could provide the supports in those areas, be direct and precise when you're communicating with your employees also look at each job and each potential employee differently. So I was talking about the strategies again, it's fabulous to have all of these in your toolbox, and it's important for those who are providing the support and the job coaching to know that multiple strategies have been found, you know, successful and in literature.

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:51:51](#)

And certainly the behavior strategies that we apply are absolutely without a doubt you know, necessary, but make sure that you, again, assess each employee in and of themselves and define what strategies are going to be best for them. Treat employees with autism, the same as one would treat any employee and then hold them accountable. Just like you hold other employees accountable. That is something that I found very difficult when we were serving, you know, the young adults where a lot of our support system was really the family. And so working with the parents to understand that there are still consequences when tasks are not completed. And what is that consequence? What would be a normal consequence? Are you given extended time? Are you given extended time only if you actually communicated that you needed extended time or are there other things that we need to consider and, you know, have sit downs and talks and additional coaching, just like you might as a, as a manager with anyone else.

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:52:54](#)

So being accountable is still very important. And one of the areas that we really focused on was the consistency between the different environments. We found that if one environment didn't have the same level of expectation, it was much more difficult for us to achieve the success in our environment as a vocational placement. So trying to, again, coach and educate and even train the families and those that this person spends time within the community, that these expectations are going to be the same across all environments to really elevate their





success across the board. And that can be sometimes more difficult than just training the individual with autism spectrum disorder is trying to get everybody on the same page, focused on the end result of the job as well. You know, rather than focusing on again, a specific way that it has to be completed or a specific schedule that has to be followed as long as you're able to still meet the outcome.

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:53:54](#)

If that's possible, if it's not possible, then obviously those modifications, you know, they're not going to take place, but if it is try to keep in mind the big picture, and that will give them a lot more autonomy in terms of being able to set their schedule as well as learn to self regulate perhaps, and identify when they need breaks and also, you know, identify the different types of, of things that they can do to get a break and, and those sorts of things. So, you know, try to focus on that end result and give them some flexibility if flexibility is appropriate for that individual, which is kind of an oxymoron when you talk about the amount of structure that we also want to apply, but again, it's based on the individual, be willing and able to commit to getting the appropriate supports and jobs structures in place for that employee.

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:54:49](#)

We, I think, you know, we're, we're following our mission here at step-by-step. So we're much more able to employ modifications and individualize the work placement for anybody, because that's what we do every day. That's not going to be the case and typical, you know, work environments that are restaurant fast food restaurant, perhaps, or even, you know, any of the offices that may be in your local neighborhood and be interested in willing to make these job opportunities available to persons with disabilities and autism spectrum disorders. So be aware and sensitive to that and try to establish the appropriate supports upfront and not put all of that responsibility on the employer. Otherwise you may not get quite the reception you're looking for. And then finally make sure that you're consulting with, you know, all of the different support structures and individuals that are part of those support structures, as you need, make sure that they're available, make sure you know how to contact them and that there's assistance when needed that we can come in and we can follow up. I really liked the idea of prescheduled followups in addition, because then some things that may not be pertinent today, but I still



want to talk about, I just don't want to forget about them. I can wait and take that to our next, you know, visit when you're here and we can cover a bunch of things all at once and now we're still maintaining and we're improving the really the entire experience for everyone. So that's something to consider as well,

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:56:34](#)

collaborate with the supports that you have, have some sort of connection with those employment support systems. And when we look at the role of support services, know, that they should be checking in on the employee, occasionally know that they should be available. If problems arise also know that they should function as the liaison for other non-work issues that may be affecting job performance, such as the individual that I was mentioning before. And when he had come, you know, late that morning, or we had a tough day and the diet Coke was exploded things were happening outside that we really needed to make sure someone knew about so that he could get the right supports and that it didn't impact his job. And so make sure that you're aware of those things as well. There's a quick summary of some study findings. This was a really, I think fabulous study to look at.

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:57:27](#)

And some of the things that was part of the discussion with the supervisors that participated is that they believed that they altering their own attitude was key to being able to successfully employ individuals with autism spectrum disorders. They also believed that additional support employ- you know, applied with this employee, the individual with autism, really, it was no different than what they would do with others. And that goes back to learning how to manage and communicate with really anyone in your office that you're supervising so that they can be successful supervisors. Also, they believed had to have the ability to expand on the strengths of the employee in order to ensure success and know the employee well enough to identify those strengths. And in order to successfully employ individuals with autism, they did say that the support that they got from the community, whether it be the vocational rehabilitation facility or the job coaches, the program consultants and coordinators, all of those things were absolutely necessary for this to be successful for both of them and that individual. And then they developed specific strategies for supervising the employees and those strategies that they created. They, they



looked at right up front to make sure that they were easily employed in their, in their environment and that they didn't become a burden and then less likely to be applied when needed.

Michelle LaMarc...: [01:58:57](#)

So that brings us to a close on vocational topics and job coaching. I hope that you, again, leave with a pretty thorough understanding of some of the barriers and challenges, as well as some tips for success and the different options that may exist in your community for finding a good job that hopefully pays a good wage and that you can find the right supports for your loved one or the individual that you work with. Thanks for joining us. And we'll see you again.