

Exploring Employment:

“Who are you, and what do you do?”

TRAINING SUMMARY:

Breakthroughs in attitudes, training, and support have opened the promise of employment and a working lifestyle to many adults with disabilities who once were left out. Some state agencies are adopting “employment first” policies, assuring that funding and programming are based on the assumption that employment is preferable and possible, and should be the focus of adult planning. Outdated service models such as sheltered day programs and workshops are no longer considered to provide appropriate transition-to-work activities, or productive longterm settings. New types of employment, from “customized employment” to microenterprise and e-commerce, are making the world of work more diverse, and that is good news for people with autism. Families and schools need to start much earlier and think much bigger in building job skills and the expectation of gainful employment. The process of job exploration, rather than traditional testing and assessment, is proving valuable in matching or developing the right job for the individual. On the job, an array of possible accommodations can be used to adapt the physical and social environment to the needs and strengths of employees on the autism spectrum.

TRAINING GOAL:

The goal of this training is for parents, teachers, and potential employers to explore and appreciate the growing array of employment possibilities available to adults with autism, and recognize the roles they can play in helping people with autism realize their job potential.

TRAINING OBJECTIVES:

The objectives of the training are for the participants to:

1. Appreciate that employment is a lifespan issue reflecting values and attitudes, and that a working lifestyle is crucial to being a valued participant in one’s community
2. Be aware of new options in job supports and job creation, including “customized employment” and entrepreneurship
3. Examine what schools and families can do to support employment awareness and job-related skill building from the earliest grades
4. Understand why job exploration is more powerful than assessment and “readiness,” and how exploration can be conducted
5. Consider the wide range of job-related accommodations that can be developed and used at the work site
6. Understand why employing people with autism is good for business

METHODS TO ACHIEVE OBJECTIVES:

Training content can be delivered via webinar incorporating lecture and discussion (app. 1½ hours). This training also can be delivered in person in a traditional training or classroom setting incorporating lecture, videos, discussion, and interactive group exercises (2-3 hours).