

Welcome to the VR Community Learning Connections!

Understanding and Supporting Autistic Individuals on the Job

- Participants are muted.
- For questions, use the Microsoft Form link provided in the chat.
- Closed Captioning is available.
 - click on CC button on your toolbar, then select Show Subtitles.
- ASL Interpreter, Lauri Krouse, will be spotlighted.
- This training will be recorded.
- For technical assistance, contact Marianne Wygant marianne.wygant@state.mn.us



Understanding and Supporting Autistic Individuals on the Job

VR Community Learning Connections

April 4, 2024

Today's Presenters

Abbie Wells-Herzog (she/her)

VRS Autism Specialist

Jillian Nelson (she/her)

Community Resource and Policy Advocate, Autism Society of Minnesota

Marci Jasper (she/her)

VRS Placement Specialist

What is Autism and why is it so impactful?

Autism is a pervasive neuro-developmental disorder:

- Pervasive=affects all aspects of life
- Neuro=brain
- Developmental=lifelong

Autistic people's brains are wired differently:

- MRIs have shown differences in the hippocampus, amygdala, and white matter that connects different regions of the brain of autistic individuals.

Autism Prevalence

- Based on updated research published March 23, 2023, by the CDC
 - 1 in 34 Minnesotans are autistic.
 - In Minnesota, prevalence remains higher among boys. Now, boys are 4.4 times as likely to be identified with autism compared to girls.
 - Nationally, the prevalence rate is 1 in 36.
- Last year, autism was the #1 primary disability group served at 24.7% of all VR participants.

Autism is considered a developmental disability

Why is that important to know?

- Developmental disabilities cause interruptions in physical, learning, language and/or behavior areas.
- Having a developmental disability impacts day-to day functioning.
- Developmental disabilities last a lifetime.
- Many 18 year old, and 22 year old autistic students are not going to be developmentally ready for a career job. Several autistic adults have acknowledged they felt more ready for adulting in their 30's.
- VR staff need to meet individuals where they are at, developmentally.

Autism and co-occurring conditions can make things complicated

Autism is often accompanied by co-occurring conditions, including:

- Depression, anxiety, OCD, ADHD
- Communication disorders, learning disabilities
- Gastrointestinal issues, epilepsy, and intellectual disability
- Sensory integration issues, sleep disorders, and other medical disorders.

Co-occurring Conditions

- Between 70-95% of children with autism have a co-occurring mental health diagnosis.
- Around 30% of individuals with autism also have an intellectual disability.
- Around 20% of individuals with autism also have epilepsy.
- More than 40% of individuals with autism have PTSD.

It is important to remember....

Each Autistic person is unique.

One Autistic Woman's Perspective

- Give me some time to get to know you and trust you before jumping into business.
- Sometimes I need more time to process what you are saying. At the same time please don't talk down to me.
- If you communicate, what we will talk about before each meeting, I will be ready and less likely to panic and shutdown.
- If I am not returning calls or emails, either my mental health is bad or I do not want to do what you are pushing me to do.
- If you tell me I need to have more eye contact, I will leave your office.

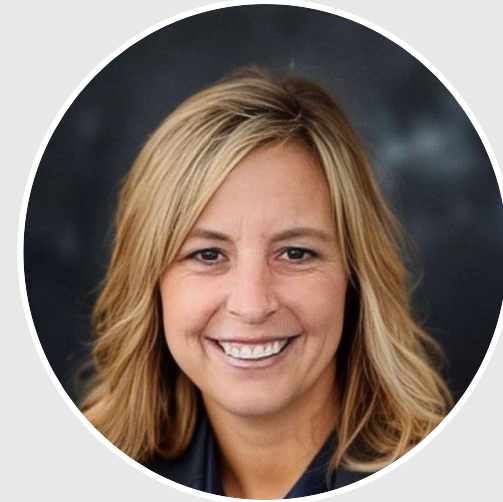
Panel Discussion



Abbie Wells-Herzog,
Moderator



Jillian Nelson
Panelist



Marci Jasper
Panelist

- [Job Accommodation Network Autism Pages](#)
- [Autism Society of Minnesota](#)
- [Hire Autism: Prepare for an Interview](#)
- [Disclosure Decisions to Get the Job](#)



Q&A

What is your one takeaway from today that you will implement into your practices?

- <https://app.wooclap.com/ENRZQQ?from=event-page>



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<https://forms.office.com/g/Mh5BNjifLa>

Thank you!

