

# Florida State University's Autism Institute

## 2023 Summer Training Institute on Autism: *Advances in Evidence-Based Practice for Autism Spectrum Disorder*

June 13 – June 15, 2023

Presenter: Kara Hume, Ph.D

Title and Format: "Being Happy is My Dream:" Postsecondary Aspirations of Autistic Youth (PDF of PowerPoint slides)

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# “Being happy is my dream”: Postsecondary Aspirations of Autistic Youth

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*Language use: Will be using identity first language,  
or “on the spectrum”  
per Botha, Hanlon, & Williams, 2021*

# Learning Objectives

- 1. Describe the post-secondary experiences and aspirations of autistic young adults** related to employment, post-secondary education, and social engagement.
- 2. Identify 3 areas of high school programming that the young adults noted could be improved** to better support them in reaching their post-secondary goals.
- 3. Learn how to implement 3 related strategies/curriculum areas/structural changes** that the young adults noted could be improved to better support them in reaching their post-secondary goals.



# Beginning with Acknowledgements and Thank You

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Autistic youth and their families and the school staff members who have participated in our studies.

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# CSESA Resources



The CSESA website (link via QR Code) has dozens of free resources available for researchers, practitioners, families, and youth.

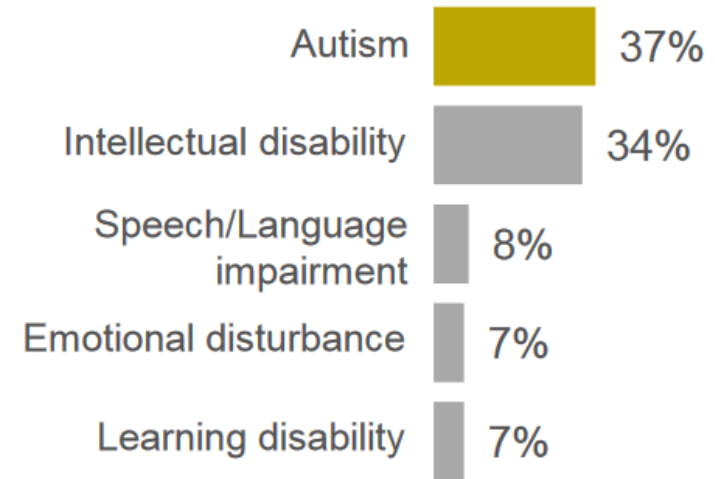
The screenshot shows the homepage of the Center on Secondary Education for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (CSESA). At the top left is the CSESA logo, and at the top right are links for "CSESA LIVE" and "LOGIN", along with a search bar. A blue navigation bar contains the following menu items: "ABOUT THE CENTER", "FAMILIES", "PROFESSIONALS", and "RESEARCHERS". The main content area features a large background image of a black graduation cap. On the right side of this image is a text box with the heading "The Center on Secondary Education for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders" and a "LEARN MORE &gt;" button. Below the main image are three statistics: "700+ students and families participated in CSESA research activities", "60 schools currently involved in the CSESA study", and "20+ resources available for educators, families, and students". The page is divided into two columns: "Research Activities" on the left and "Key Resources" on the right. Under "Research Activities", there are sections for "Conference Presentations" and "Articles", each with a brief description and a "MORE" button. Under "Key Resources", there are sections for "Autism at-a-Glance" and "CSESA Intervention Materials", each with a brief description and a "MORE" button.

# Why are these **experiences and aspirations** important to know?

- Studies have documented that many autistic individuals experience markedly less involvement during adulthood compared to their peers across a range of outcomes (Anderson et al., 2014; Gotham et al., 2015; Shattuck et al., 2012)

What happened to young adults with autism between high school and their early 20s?

More young adults with **autism** were disconnected from both work and education than their peers with other disabilities.



Percent never worked or went to school



# Why are these **experiences** and **aspirations** important to know?

- Many of this data are from cohorts that aged into the adult system many years ago and/or samples that offer limited diversity
- Limited data from autistic viewpoint



# Why are these **experiences** and aspirations important to know?

- Provides insight into programming, supports, and experiences we can provide in high school (& beyond)





Who are these young adults?

# CSESA Study



## About CSESA

- Research & Development Center funded by the Department of Education (IES)
- Purpose: To develop and study a comprehensive high school program for autistic students

## CSESA Sample

- Two cohorts of schools enrolled for 2 years each
- 60 high schools in 3 states (NC, WI, CA)
- 547 autistic students
- 539 school staff

# CSESA Follow-Up Study

- Followed CSESA participants into young adulthood
- Data collection occurred ~4 years after enrollment in CSESA study (~2 years after study completion)
- Successfully recruited approximately 38% of the original sample (n = 211)

How did we gather this  
data?

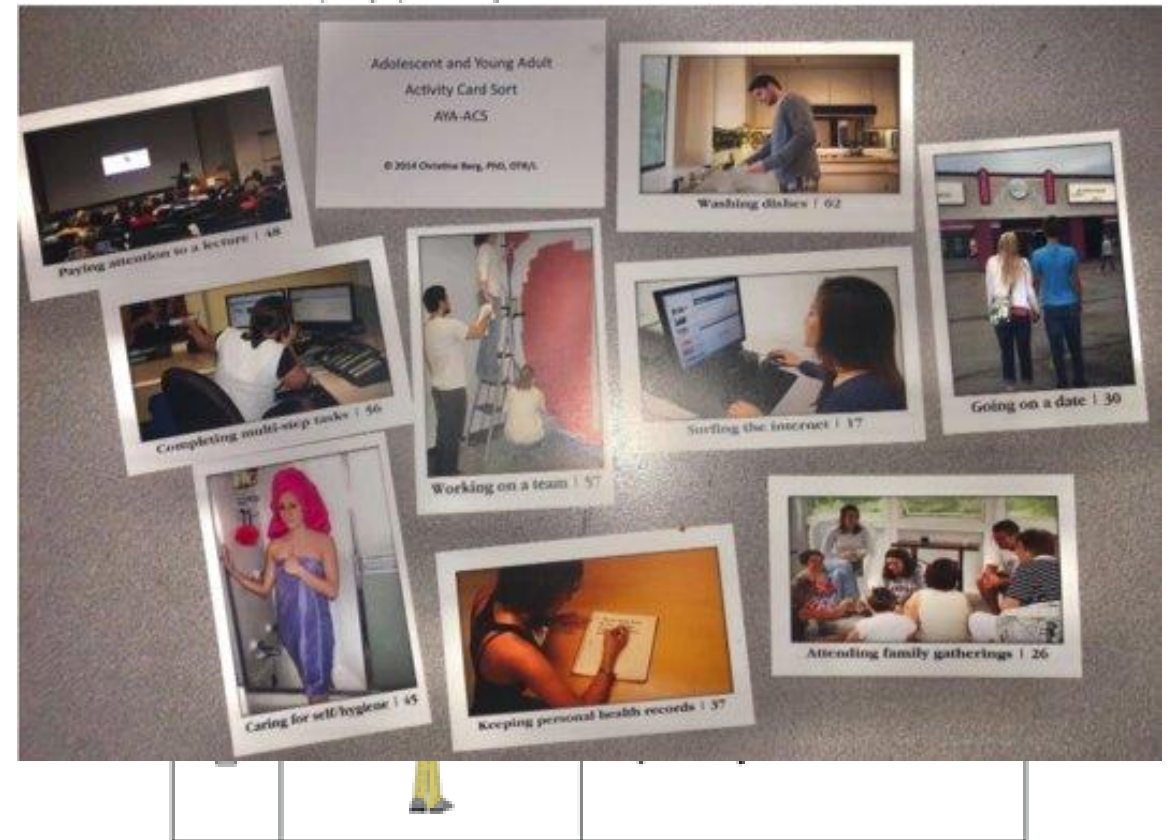
# Methods

- Young adults (YAs) completed questionnaires and interviews on a variety of topics including education, employment, social and community participation, and hopes & aspirations
- Reflected on high school experiences as well
- One time point



## Young Adult Check-In

Thank you for participating in the CSESA project! We are using these questions to learn more about life after high school. Your participation is voluntary and you can choose to skip any question you do not want to answer.













# Post-Secondary Education Experiences

## Life During High School/Transition Program





In this section, we are going to ask you about activities during high school/transition program.

<b>Taking Classes:</b> 	<input type="radio"/> <b>No</b> 	<input type="radio"/> <b>In the Middle</b> 	<input type="radio"/> <b>Yes</b> 
6) I take, or have taken, classes somewhere different than my high school.	<input type="radio"/> <b>No</b> N = 14 % = 58.3		<input type="radio"/> <b>Yes</b> N = 10 % = 41.7
6a) If "Yes", I liked the classes.	<input type="radio"/> <b>No</b> N = 0 % = 0	<input type="radio"/> <b>In the Middle</b> N = 3 % = 30	<input type="radio"/> <b>Yes</b> N = 7 % = 70

# Post-Secondary Employment Experiences

<b>Work:</b> 	① <b>No</b> 	○ <b>In the Middle</b> 	 ○ <b>Yes</b>
7) I have, or had, a job.	① N = 9 % = 37.5	(Cell is blacked out)	③ N = 15 % = 62.5
7a) If "Yes", I like the job I have/had.	① N = 0 % = 0.0	② N = 2 % = 13.3	③ N = 13 % = 86.7





# Social & Community Engagement Experiences

<b>Social Activities During High School:</b> 	<input type="radio"/> <b>No</b> 	<input type="radio"/> <b>In the Middle</b> 	<input type="radio"/> <b>Yes</b> 
8) I have friends.	<input type="radio"/> <b>No</b> N = 6 % = 21.4		<input type="radio"/> <b>Yes</b> N = 22 % = 78.6
9) I like my friends.	<input type="radio"/> <b>No</b> N = 0 % = 0.0	<input type="radio"/> <b>In the Middle</b> N = 1 % = 4.5	<input type="radio"/> <b>Yes</b> N = 21 % = 95.5
10) I call or text my friends.	<input type="radio"/> <b>No</b> N = 10 % = 35.7		<input type="radio"/> <b>Yes</b> N = 18 % = 64.3
11) I like calling and texting my friends	<input type="radio"/> <b>No</b> N = 0 % = 0.0 70 = 1.9	<input type="radio"/> <b>In the Middle</b> N = 1 % = 5.6 70 = 13.1	<input type="radio"/> <b>Yes</b> N = 17 % = 94.4 70 = 85.0

How are high schools  
preparing autistic youth  
for postsecondary life?





From youth  
still in high  
school

## High School/Transition Program Experiences

First, we would like to know your feelings about high school/transition program: 	<input type="radio"/> No 	<input type="radio"/> In the Middle 	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes 
1) I like my high school or transition program.	<input type="radio"/> ① N = 1 % = 4.2	<input type="radio"/> ② N = 4 % = 16.7	<input checked="" type="radio"/> ③ N = 19 % = 79.2
2) My high school/transition program is getting me ready to live on my own.	<input type="radio"/> ① N = 5 % = 20.8	<input type="radio"/> ② N = 3 % = 12.5	<input checked="" type="radio"/> ③ N = 16 % = 66.7
3) My high school/transition program is getting me ready to get a job.	<input type="radio"/> ① N = 6 % = 25.0	<input type="radio"/> ② N = 4 % = 16.7	<input checked="" type="radio"/> ③ N = 14 % = 58.3
4) My high school/transition program is getting me ready to do activities with other people.	<input type="radio"/> ① N = 4 % = 16.7	<input type="radio"/> ② N = 6 % = 25.0	<input checked="" type="radio"/> ③ N = 14 % = 58.3
5) My high school/transition program is getting me ready to take classes after high school.	<input type="radio"/> ① N = 5 % = 20.8	<input checked="" type="radio"/> ② N = 7 % = 29.2	<input checked="" type="radio"/> ③ N = 12 % = 50.0



From young adults 1-4 years post high school

First, we would like to know your feelings about high school: 	<input type="radio"/> No 	<input type="radio"/> In the Middle 	<input type="radio"/> Yes 
1) I liked my high school.	<input type="radio"/> ① N = 9 % = 6.3	<input type="radio"/> ② N = 30 % = 21.0	<input type="radio"/> ③ N = 104 % = 72.7
2) My high school prepared me for my life now.	<input type="radio"/> ① N = 19 % = 13.3	<input type="radio"/> ② N = 52 % = 26.4	<input type="radio"/> ③ N = 72 % = 50.3
3) My high school prepared me for going to work.	<input type="radio"/> ① N = 35 % = 24.6	<input type="radio"/> ② N = 38 % = 26.8	<input type="radio"/> ③ N = 69 % = 48.6
4) My high school prepared me to do activities with other people.	<input type="radio"/> ① N = 21 % = 14.8	<input type="radio"/> ② N = 43 % = 30.3	<input type="radio"/> ③ N = 78 % = 54.9
5) My high school prepared me for taking classes after high school.	<input type="radio"/> ① N = 31 % = 22.1	<input type="radio"/> ② N = 41 % = 29.3	<input type="radio"/> ③ N = 68 % = 48.6

What could we do differently in high schools to better support the aspirations of autistic young adults?

*Language use: Will be using identity first language,  
or "on the spectrum"  
per Botha, Hanlon, & Williams, 2021*

# Learning Objectives

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# Three areas of high school to improve

Creating	Building	Teaching
Creating neurodiversity affirming schools	Building school & community connections	Teaching explicit transition related skills

# 1. Creating neurodiversity affirming schools

'If everyone took the time to understand kids with disabilities they would understand...'

Not very supportive of my disability identity

She never saw Autism as a disability, it was a different way of learning or thinking.

I suppose I would enjoy finding a group of like-minded individuals to myself



# Creating neurodiversity affirming schools

- the uniqueness of *all* brains
  - Judy Singer, first used the term *Neurodiversity* in late 1990s
- “the neurodiversity movement frames neurological diversity as **invaluable for societal progress** and **yet inherently challenging at times**, meaning that autism can both be an identity, and an embodied disability with aspects of impairment” –Botha & Gillespie-Lynch, 2022

# How does this help?

- Big task which requires thought, collaboration, and work at multiple levels/systems
- **Shifts the burden of change**
  - How are we preparing the **broader community** to be supportive and inclusive of their future autistic colleagues, classmates, students, teachers, employees(ers), friends, partners, attendees, visitors...
  - Barriers to these aspirations well beyond individual skills
- **Positive identity development; collective identity**

# Instead of...

## Clinical Focus

### Ableism to Empowerment: Navigating School Structures When Working With Students Who Stutter

Nina A. Reeves,<sup>a</sup> Timothy W. Flynn,<sup>b</sup> and Reuben Z. Schuff<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Frisco Independent School District, TX <sup>b</sup> Arlington Public Schools, VA <sup>c</sup> American Board of Fluency and Fluency Disorders, Kimberly, WI

**Table 3.** Relevant Individualized Education Program (IEP) sections: Alexander.

Potential IEP goal areas

Exploring support strategies & connection to larger community

Accommodations



1. Increasing knowledge about speech production and stuttering.
  2. Exploring speech tension and identification of location of tension in speech articulators
  3. Educating others about stuttering in self-chosen format (e.g., stutter notebook entries, charts, emails, flyers, classroom presentation)
  4. Choosing practical avenues to advocate for self (with support from others) to deal with teasing
  5. Creating opportunities for Alex to explore communication strengths and benefits of stuttering
  6. Exploring speaking strategies that decrease avoidance and increase ease of communication
  7. Providing opportunities for Alex to choose a path to involvement in the stuttering community and support organizations
- 
1. Alexander will be provided extended time for answering questions, participating in classroom discussions, and during oral presentations.
  2. Timed oral reading-fluency assessments will be optional for Alex. If he chooses to participate, final scores will not be used for reading placement and/or intervention decisions.

# To Consider...



*Autism Peer-to-Peer Series* is a publication of the Center on Secondary Education for Students with ASD (CESA).

NOVEMBER 2021

## Building Inclusive Classrooms with Your Neurodivergent Peers

**A** Activity A

**B** Activity B

**C** Activity C

**D** Activity D

 Autism Tuned In

Watch "What's Up with Nick?" (3 minutes)



[Home](#) > [Journal of Developmental and Physical Disabilities](#) > [Article](#)

REVIEW ARTICLE | [Published: 26 March 2020](#)

### Autism Awareness Interventions for Children and Adolescents: a Scoping Review

[Katie Cremin](#)  [Olive Healy](#), [Michelle Spirtos](#) & [Sarah Quinn](#)

*Journal of Developmental and Physical Disabilities* **33**, 27–50 (2021) | [Cite this article](#)

1426 Accesses | 8 Citations | [Metrics](#)

- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

# Understanding Autism

## Professional Development Curriculum:

*Strategies for Classroom Success and  
Effective Use of Teacher Supports*



Secondary school environments can be challenging for students with ASD

- ▶ **Transitions**
  - Require multiple changes
  - Predictable and yet still unpredictable
- ▶ **Sights and sounds of hallways**
  - Noise and commotion can be overwhelming
  - After navigating the hallways, students are often stressed and unsettled



# To Consider

- Affinity groups bring together people who have something important in common- race, gender, profession, special interest...

## Anime

### Anime Club!

Welcome, Shepard high students! This year, as well as previous years, Shepard is offering an open invitation to our students to join the amazing group that is Anime Club! In this after-school activity, students will come together to either watch anime, read manga, share art, or make Japanese food dependent on the event of that day. While this can be foreign to most, regularly attending students invite anyone interested with open arms and a big smile. So please, if any of what you have read has piqued your curiosity, then join the classroom link below and become a member today!

Join our club through Google Classroom using code: **iov3tot**

**Club Mission:** Anime club is an after-school activity that aims to bring Shepard's student body together and broaden their understanding of the inherently deep culture of Japan. To accomplish this, Anime Club looks to expand student horizons by exploring various aspects such as **Anime** (Similar to an American cartoon with attention to artistic detail, and occasionally focusing on deep themes representative of differing life values), **manga** (Similar to American Comics addressing ideas from minute to complex), **art** (A culturally different artistic style which has been perfected over generations), and occasionally, learning how to make **food** (foods can include fish product, but allergies are fully considered!! Traditional staples, like sushi and onigiri, are eaten and can be taught). While the culture may be vast, exploring the uncharted terrain becomes manageable through the mission's goal to reinforce the glue of diversity, the love for knowledge, and the enjoyment of student



American Secondary Education 42(3) Summer 2014

### The Power of Positive Affinity Groups: A "Sci-Fi" Solution to Bullying

#### Author

DAVID NURENBERG, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor of Education at Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and an English teacher at Concord Carlisle High School in Concord, Massachusetts.

# Ensure...

- Student voice, priorities, and interests are central to the IEP, course selection, & transition plans (more in #3)



## Secondary School Success Checklist

The Secondary School Success Checklist (SSSC) is an evaluation of student skills in independence and behavior, transition, social competence, and academic skills completed by staff, families, and students.

Download: [SSSC\\_Parent\\_Final.pdf](#), Download: [SSSC\\_Staff\\_FINAL.pdf](#), Download: [SSS-C\\_STUDENT.pdf](#), Download: [SSSC\\_PARENT\\_fillable.pdf](#), Download: [SSSC\\_STAFF\\_fillable.pdf](#), Download: [SSSC\\_STUDENT\\_fillable.pdf](#)



## 2. Building school & community connections (& teach how to find them)

I would want to have friends that share the same interests as me

I need more guidance to help identify steps/classes to get more training

I would like to take exercise class and art classes.

look for more volunteer opportunities

# Building school & community connections (& teach how to find them)

## In-school connections



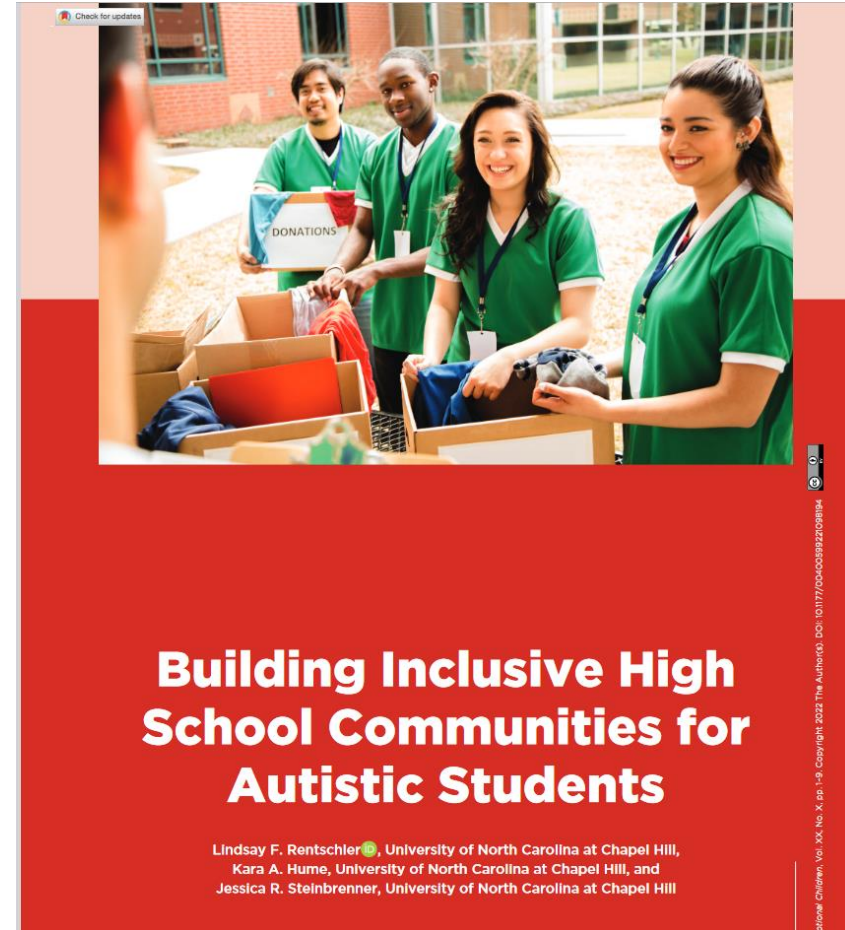
## HOW to find connections post high-school

*Meetup*



# How does this help?

- Protective factor for mental health
- Connections can lead to:
  - Long term friendships
  - Mentors
  - Career possibilities
  - Interpersonal skill development
- Life-long skills to seek community



# In-school connections

Articles

## Exploring Feasibility and Fit: Peer-Mediated Interventions for High School Students With Autism Spectrum Disorders

Erik W. Carter ✉ Jessica R. Dykstra Steinbrenner & Laura J. Hall | Jonathan Campbell & Kara Hume

Pages 157-169 | Received 31 Aug 2017, Accepted 17 Dec 2017, Published online: 27 Dec 2019

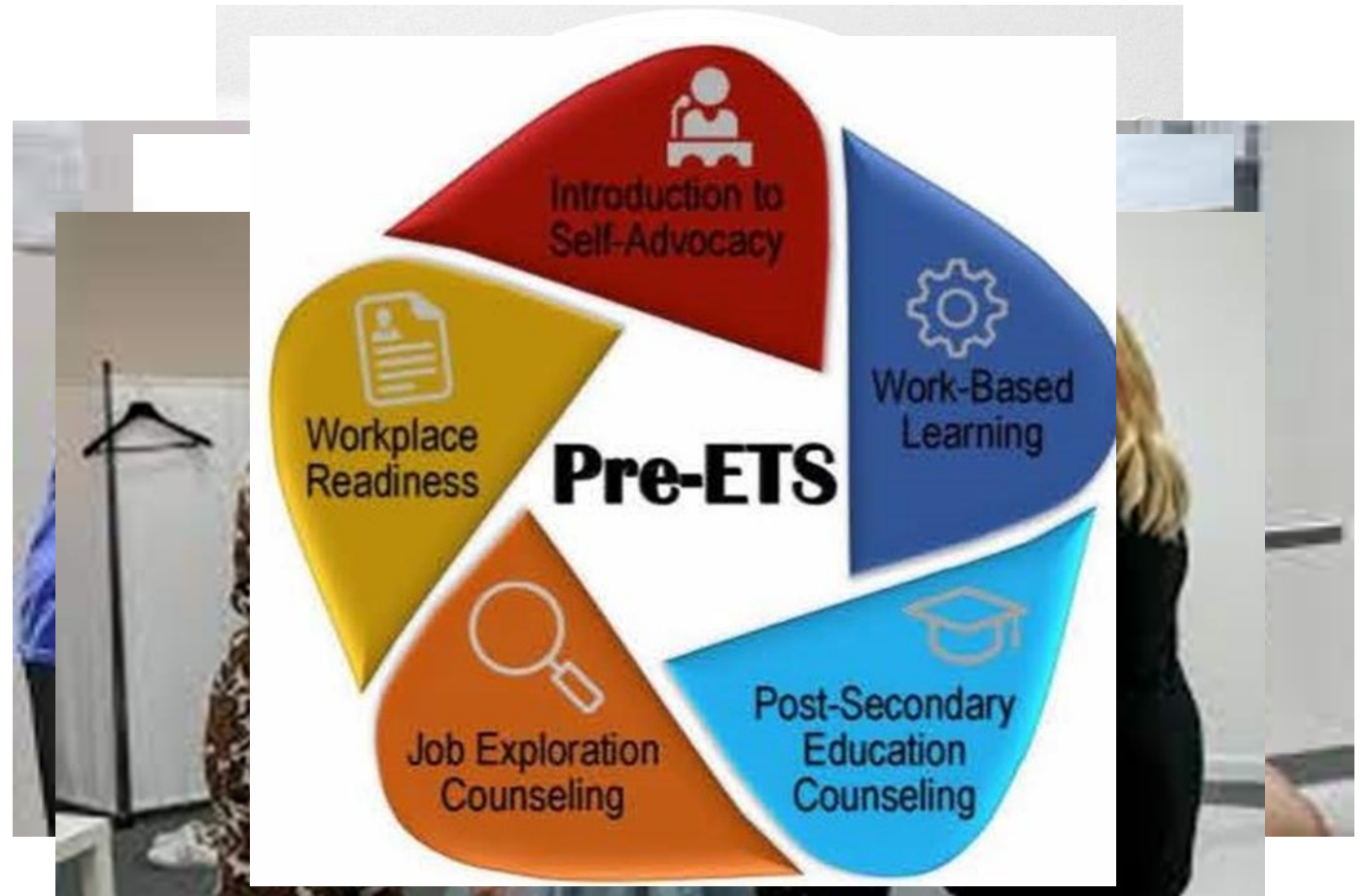
- Use of peer networks & peer supports





# In-school connections

- Clubs & classes again 😊
- Connect with teachers with similar interests
- Connect with teachers with expertise
- Connect with potential job shadows at the school
- Connect with postsecondary supports



# In-school connections/How to find Connections

- Community School Resource Mapping

## Community and School Resource Mapping (CSRM)

### Community and School Resource Mapping

This is the manual for Community and School Resource Mapping. It has sample maps.

Download:  [Community and Resource Mapping Manual.pdf](#)

### Community and School Resource Mapping Training Powerpoint

This is a .pdf version of the Community and School Resource Mapping Training Powerpoint.

Download:  [Mapping Training.final\\_.pdf](#)

### Sample CSESA Community Map

This is a sample community map to help get you started.

Download:  [CSESA-Community Map.pdf](#)

### Sample CSESA Community Map in Spanish

This is a sample community map in Spanish to get you started.

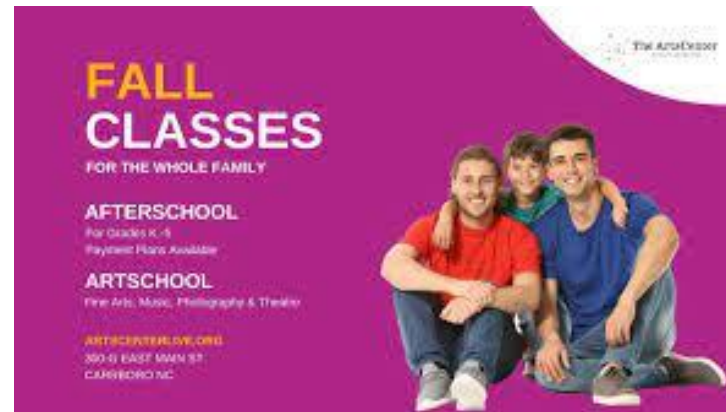
Download:  [CSESA Community Map\\_SPANISH.pdf](#)

I WANT TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT RECREATION, ART, & MUSIC THERAPIES FOR MY CHILD. WHO SHOULD I CALL?			
Agency Name	Program Summary	Address	Contact Information
ABLE Youth	Helps people ages 3-22 in wheelchairs to live independently and participate in sports		(615) 973-5372 <a href="http://www.ableyouth.org">www.ableyouth.org</a>
ArtSpeaks Art Therapy Enrichment and Services	Individual/group art therapy for people with disabilities (home, school, or day program)	700 Wilsonwood Place Nashville, TN 37206	(217) 204-1562 <a href="mailto:tg.artspeaks@gmail.com">tg.artspeaks@gmail.com</a>
Camp Will: Therapeutic Summer Day Camp	Specialized day camp for peoples ages 6-23 with physical/developmental disabilities		(615) 790-5719 ext. 21 <a href="http://www.wcparksandrec.com/seniors-therapeutics/activities">www.wcparksandrec.com/seniors-therapeutics/activities</a>
Metro Parks and Recreation Department (Disabilities Programs)	Adult day program, monthly weekend activities; summer day camps for adults/children		(615) 862-8479 <a href="http://www.nashville.gov/parks">www.nashville.gov/parks</a>
Musical Bridges (music therapy)	Music therapy services to individuals with disabilities in the Nashville area		(888) 687-2734 <a href="http://www.musicalbridges.com">www.musicalbridges.com</a>
Positive RePercussions (music therapy)	Group therapeutic drumming		(615) 669-3786 <a href="http://www.positiverepercussions.com">www.positiverepercussions.com</a>

# How to find connections

- Embed in class (any subject)
  - “I want to learn more about xx...how could I do that?”
    - Link to community resources to take classes

- How to find contact info?
- How to email?
- How to call?
- How to pay?



# How to find connections

- Embed in clubs/extra curriculars
  - “I want to keep doing this post-high school...how could I do that?”

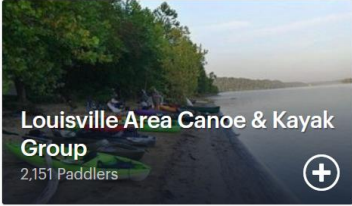








meetup

## Kayaking groups in Louisville

Here's a look at some Kayaking groups near Louisville.

Join Meetup

Sort by Best match

 <p><b>Louisville Area Canoe &amp; Kayak Group</b> 2,151 Paddlers</p>	 <p><b>Long Boat Kayakers</b> 349 Paddlers</p>	 <p><b>Explorer Chicks of Louisville</b> 2,651 Explorer Chicks</p>
 <p><b>Louisville 20s-40s Meetup</b> 2,448 Members</p>	 <p><b>Hike and Bike the Ville</b> 2,370 Members</p>	 <p><b>Louisville Hiking Club</b> 6,422 Hikers</p>
 <p><b>Reset, Recharge &amp; Reconnect</b></p>	 <p><b>Reset, Recharge &amp; Reconnect</b></p>	 <p><b>Reset, Recharge &amp; Reconnect</b></p>



# How to find connections

- Embed in clubs/extra curriculars
  - “I want to keep doing this post-high school...how could I do that?”

---

Louisville Parks and Recreation basketball leagues are for ages 18 & older. Our leagues provide a great indoor environment for friendly competition, fitness, socializing, and camaraderie. Co-ed Leagues are offered on a first come, first serve basis with a (10) team league maximum.

## Adult Basketball League



# How to find connections

- Embed in case management
  - “I want to connect with autism related organizations after high school”
    - Link to agencies & non-profits while in high school

- How to find contact info?
- How to email?
- How to call?
- What to ask?



Autism Society  
of NORTH CAROLINA

**B3 Coffee**  
Being • Belonging • Becoming



### 3. Teaching explicit transition related skills

Online classes  
about math  
or money  
management

More life  
skills, cooking  
classes

Learn about how to  
invest more in  
stocks

Keep in touch with  
money - make a  
monthly budget

Maybe have a  
girlfriend

Driving  
skills

Buy a house on  
my own

# Teaching Explicit Transition-Related Skills

- Independent living
  - Chores – cooking, cleaning, taking care of pets
  - Financial literacy – paying bills, budgeting, investment,
  - Autonomy – signing a lease, driving, public transportation
- Leisure
  - Community engagement
  - Interests, hobbies, etc.
- Health and wellness
  - Exercise routines
  - Health literacy & advocacy



# How does this help?

- Explicit instruction supports skill development
- High school activities and skill development are predictive of positive outcomes in young adulthood



# Find the hooks

- Ensure students are involved in setting goals, choosing skills



## Student Involvement in the IEP (SD-IEP)

### Student Involvement in the IEP

This is the manual to support Student Involvement in the IEP

**Download:**  [Student Involvement in the IEP Manual.pdf](#)

### Student Involvement in the IEP Training Powerpoint

This is a .pdf of the Student Involvement in the IEP training powerpoint.

**Download:**  [Student Involvement in the IEP PPT.pdf](#)

### Student Involvement in the IEP webinar

This is a webinar for the student-involvement in the IEP intervention in the CSESA model.

*Autism at-a-Glance* is a series of practitioner and family-friendly documents created by the Center on Secondary Education for Students with ASD (CSESA) designed for high school staff members supporting students on the autism spectrum, as well as family members of adolescents with ASD. The

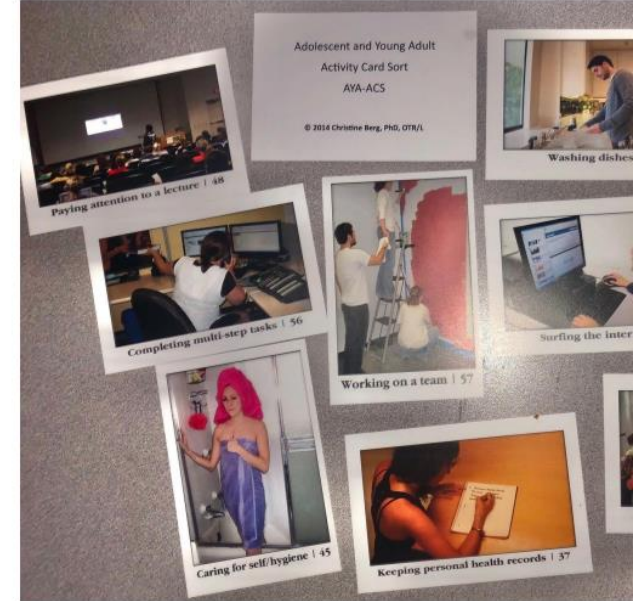
**O**ne of the biggest milestones in an adolescent's life can be getting a driver's license. However, compared to the general population, individuals with ASD get their driver's license later in life, and drive less often. Adolescents with ASD who are eligible to get a driver's license are encouraged to do so, as having a license can result in increased independence and opens door for new opportunities in social interaction and employment.

# Find the hooks

- Know student priorities
  - SSS-C
  - Card sort
- Common priorities
  - Living on their own
  - Dating
  - Financial literacy

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE CARD SORT

- Developed from occupational therapy by Berg, McCollum, Cho & Jason (2015)
- Captures subjective experience without literacy demands through use of captioned photographs
- Activities selected from literature of young adult activities, developmental theorists, and young adults selected and added names to activities
  - Chores
  - Leisure
  - Social
  - Education
  - Work
  - Health and Wellness
  - Parenting



Tomaszewski & Szidon, 2020

**PEER TO PEER**

*Autism Peer-to-Peer Series* is a publication of the Center on Secondary Education for Students with ASD (CSESA).

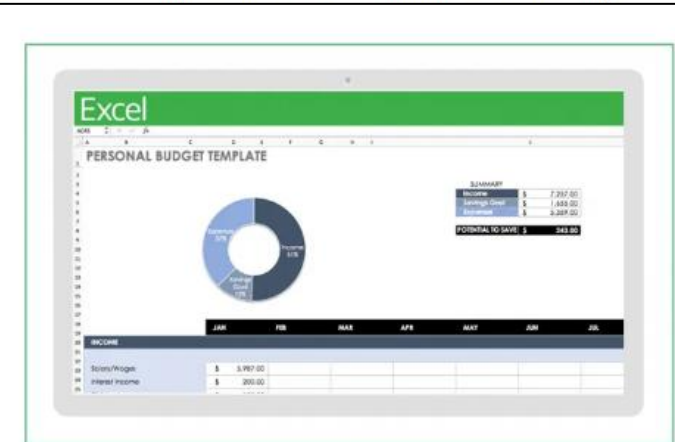
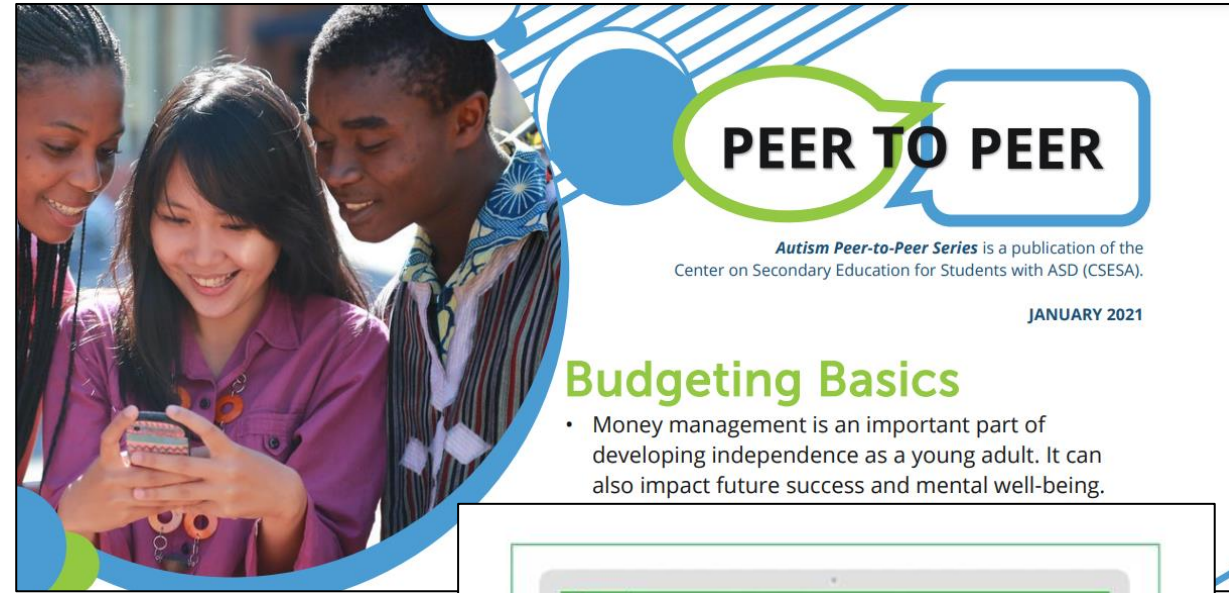
May 2021

**Healthy Dating Relationships:  
A Guide for Autistic Individuals**



# Creative ways to embed content

- Capitalizing on (or advocating for) local initiatives (e.g., financial literacy, sexual education & health)
- Collaborating with CTE teachers (e.g., culinary arts, technology)

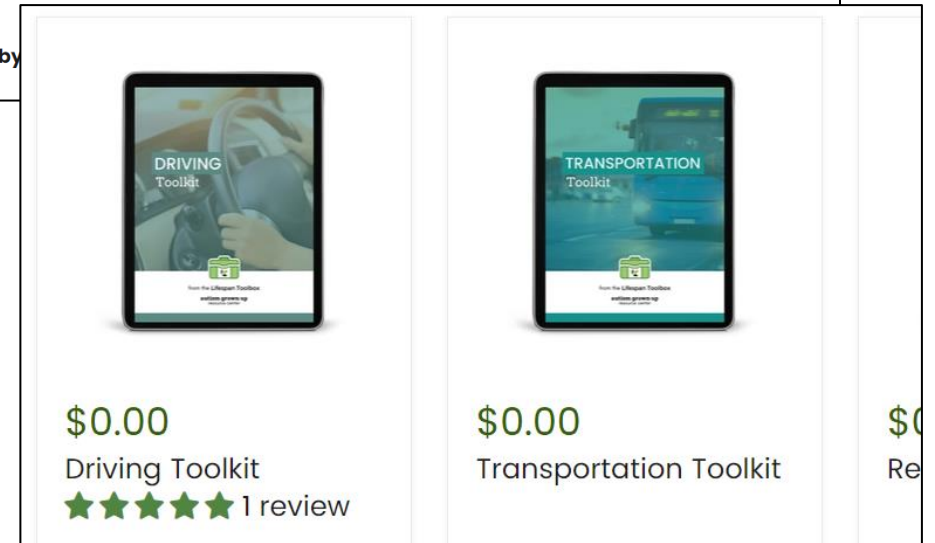
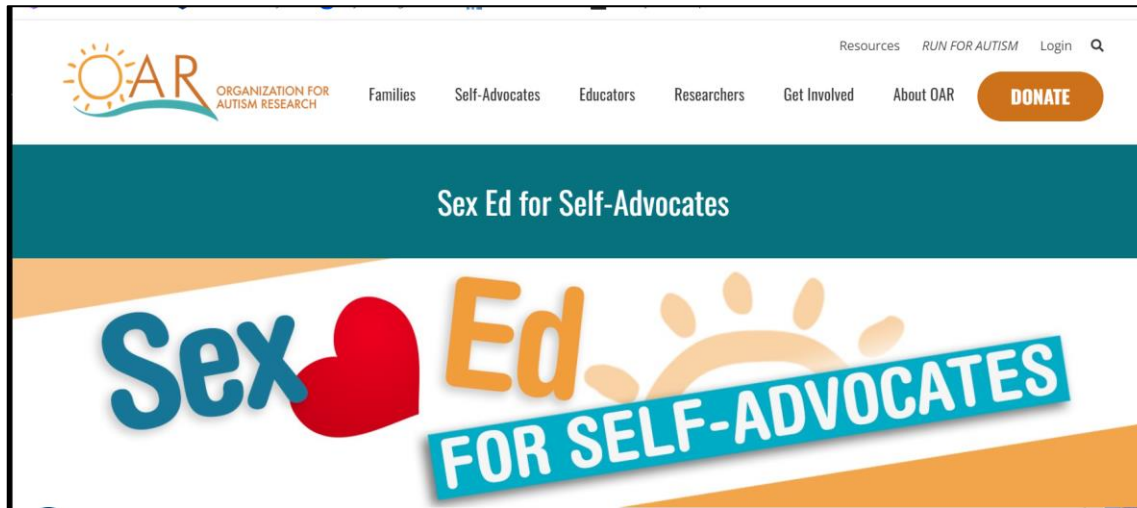
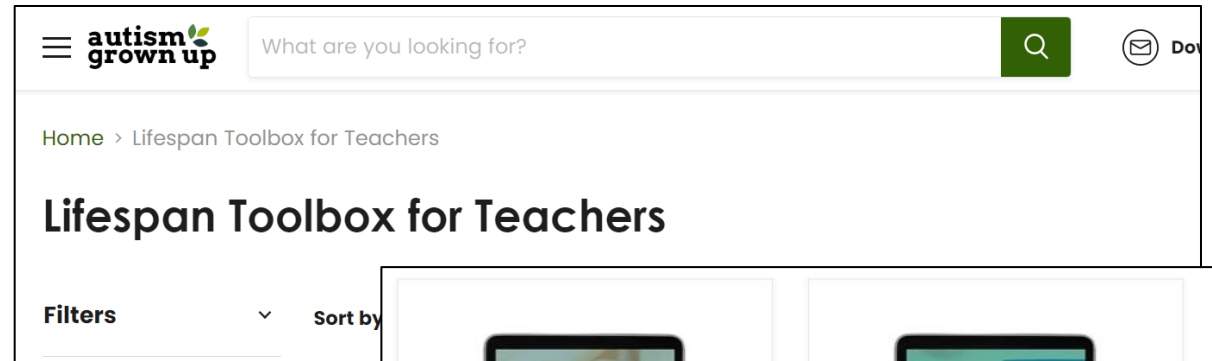


Personal Budget



# Don't reinvent the wheel

- Packaged toolkits
- National/local agencies



*Language use: Will be using identity first language,  
or “on the spectrum”  
per Botha, Hanlon, & Williams, 2021*

# Learning Objectives

- 1. Describe the post-secondary experiences and aspirations of autistic young adults** related to employment, post-secondary education, and social engagement.
- 2. Identify 3 areas of high school programming that the young adults noted could be improved** to better support them in reaching their post-secondary goals.
- 3. Learn how to implement 3 related strategies/curriculum areas/structural changes** that the young adults noted could be improved to better support them in reaching their post-secondary goals.



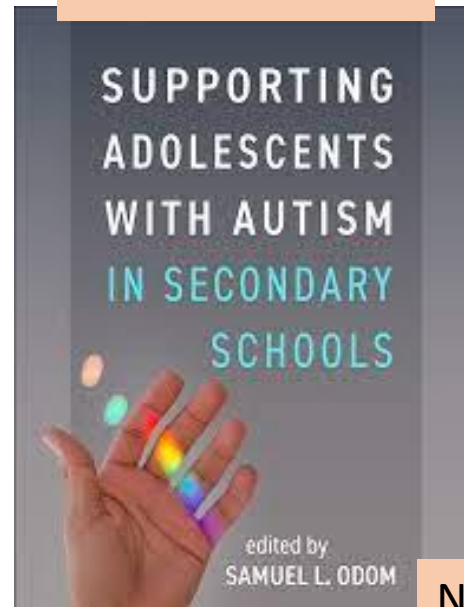


# CSESA Resources & Questions

The CSESA website (link via QR Code) has dozens of free resources available for researchers, practitioners, and families!



New Book!  
Guilford Press



No royalties for authors

