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# AMP UP

Autism Mentoring Program

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# Autism

“Autism support programs can help students learn the skills they need to move through college and into employment. Tutors and mentors teach social skills, how to cope with job interviews, and even issues related to dating and sex”(Integrated Learning Strategies).



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# Support Based Program Research

- Notable programs include:
  - Marshall University Family Focus Positive Behavior (FFPBS)
  - Alabama "The Hands Program"
  - Boston University Center for Autism Research Excellence (CARE)

<http://www.marshall.edu/atc/ffpbs/>
- Staffing includes:
  - Peer mentors/facilitators
  - Social Science program students
  - Graduate students



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# Our Support Program



- The goal of our program is to help students build self esteem, find acceptance, and develop the skills necessary for them to be successful in college.
- Autism is a spectrum disorder so therefor the service offered by this program are varied to help accommodate the unique needs students may possess (Autism speaks, 2017, para 1). Beneficial programs offer “direct support of students on the autism spectrum across major social and academic domains as well as impact campus culture through training, advocacy and collaboration with campus community (Ackels et al., 2014, pg. 26).
- Our program will focus on academic support, self advocacy, social competence and self care.



# The Mentors

- Role of mentors
  - “Mentors can act as a life coach or social mentor et. al., 2016, pg. 12).
  - “Meetings may be structured, unstructured or structured (Ackels et al., 2016, pg. 12).
- Offers training for and support for new mentors.
- The program will work collaboratively with other departments and campus resources to showcase the services available to students.
- Ultimately they are there to have the students back while still allowing them to be independent and to learn from the advice and training that the mentor gives.



# The Support



- “In high school, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) emphasizes student success, and guarantees a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment” (Ackles et. al., 2014, pg. 6)
- “Upon entering college, IDEA is replaced by support from civil rights mandates, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, ADA Amendments Act of 2008 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which emphasize access to education. Postsecondary students must seek out services by self-identifying as a student with a disability to the appropriate office, providing disability documentation and submitting a request for accommodations” (Ackles et. al., 2014, pg. 6)
- “In general, coaching and mentoring allow for the development of supportive, nonjudgmental relationships that facilitate the identification and attainment of goals, as well as the growth of competencies through modeling and guiding” (Ackles et. al., 2014, pg. 12)





# Social Competence

- Mentors will also help students identify and join clubs of interest to the student.
- Mentors can accompany students to events on campus.
- Social competence: dating, sex, making friends, communicating, reading, social questions, engaging with others.
- In particular, mentors can help integrate the student's personal and academic schedules in order to include time for social events, school functions and club meetings.
- Mentors can assist students in navigating campus.
- Knowing what kind of conversations and questions are appropriate and which are not can be discussed with their mentors.





# Self Care

- Mentors can help students focus on life skills in the following areas:
  - Wellness, sleep, hygiene, exercise, nutrition, sensory integration, stress management, medication management, financial literacy, healthy eating, and sexual education.
  - Teach students techniques to manage new sensory stimuli present in their environments so they do not become overwhelmed and isolated.
  - Developing a personal schedule to include items such as:
    - Laundry
    - Shopping
    - Hygiene
    - Cooking



## Personal Hygiene Checklist

Here is a checklist for you to complete before you go looking for a job or report for work:

- ✓ Shaved or neatly trimmed mustache and beard.
- ✓ Used deodorant
- ✓ Took a bath
- ✓ Have a neat hairstyle
- ✓ Brushed my teeth
- ✓ Combed my hair
- ✓ Cleaned my fingernails
- ✓ Have pressed and clean clothes

Don't look for a job until you can check each item that applies to you!



# Self Advocacy

- Mentors will help students become familiar with campus resources.
- Help students develop skills to identify when they need help and how to then communicate their needs to others.
  - They will practice skills with their mentors related to:
    - Seeking help
    - Ordering food
    - Speaking to professors
    - Speaking with doctors
    - Conveying their needs
    - Conveying their emotions.

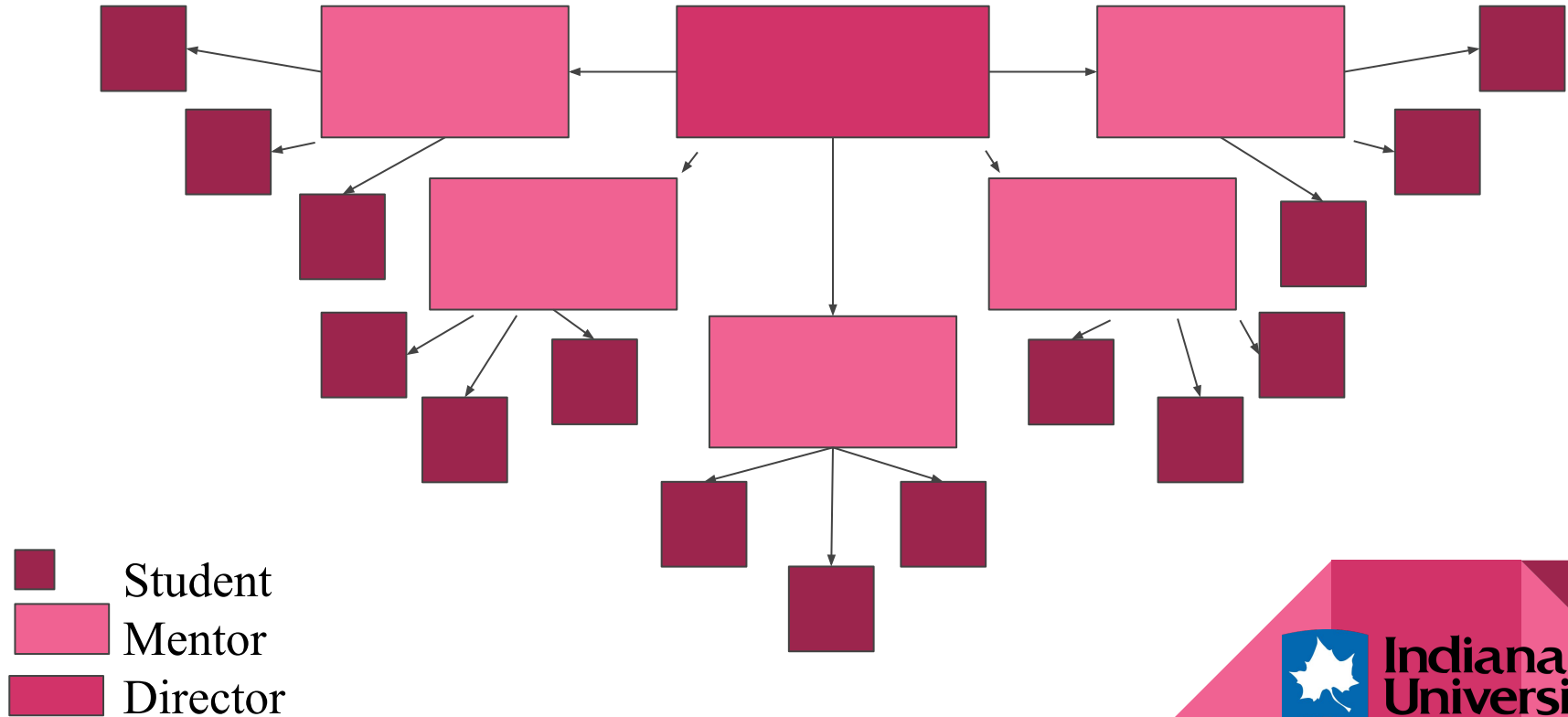


# Academic Help

- Organizing of courses and related material.
  - Creating a schedule that plans out the semester according to the course's syllabus.
  - Help student adjust to different teaching and to develop learning strategies.
  - Mentors will work with them on test preparation, note-taking, textbook reading, research writing competency.
  - For juniors and seniors career planning will be what's substituted instead of academic help.
  - Academic: meeting assignment deadlines, job interview, Organization, learning techniques.



# Organization



# Directors Duties

- They will interview the practicum students interested
- Check GPA requirements
- Requests background checks
- Meets with mentors once per week
- Will assign students to mentors
- Will assign workshop duties for mentors to carry out
- Will oversee workshops



# The Mentors

- Mentor Requirements
  - Must have a minimum 3.0 gpa for undergraduates and 3.2 for graduates
  - Must have background experience in this population
  - Meet weekly for at least 2 hours per student that they mentor.
  - Each mentor will have 3 mentees
  - Must fulfill all requirements including training, paperwork and communication with director.
  - Program will work with academic departments and require mentors to complete p experience for a grade.



# The Mentors Continued...

- Mentor Training
  - Mentors will be required attend training.
  - The training will address the following areas:
    - Privacy agreements and confidentiality.
    - Information on autism.
    - How to engage and support students with autism.
      - How to be mindful of communication differences such as eye contact.
    - How to handle emergency situations.
    - Where to refer students who need additional help.
    - Training materials related to the goals students will work on.
    - Meet and greet with who they will be assigned to.





# Budget Breakdown (\$17,400.00 per semester)

- Full Time Staff
  - Current Full Time Disabilities Director will oversee AMP.
  - Disability Services Staff will assist with paperwork
  - \$10,000.00 a year
- Graduate and Undergraduate Students
  - Will do it as part of their program.
  - \$0.00 (practicum students are not compensated financially)
- Workshops Refreshments and Snacks
  - \$1,600.00 per semester
- Workshops
  - Study Skills Workshops
    - 2 per semester each with a \$500.00 budget
  - Social Skills Workshops
    - 2 per semester each with a \$500.00 budget
  - Self Care Skills Workshops
    - 2 per semester each with a \$500.00 budget
  - Self Advocacy Skills Workshops
    - 2 per semester each with a \$500.00 budget
- Assessment Materials- Print- \$500.00
- Marketing Materials- Print- \$500.00
- Laptop- \$800.00



# Successes and Issues

- Student's Disability Support Services advisor will provide mentors with guidelines on what issues need to be focused on.
- Mentors will provide weekly updates to Disability Support Services advisors concerning any successes or challenges.
- Success and issues will be evaluated at the end of the academic year to identify how the program may be improved.
- Success will be measured on a case by case basis since every student is unique in their needs and abilities.



# REFERENCES

What is Autism? (2017). *Autism Speaks*. Retrieved from <https://www.autismspeaks.org/what-autism>

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Marsa, L. (2016). *Extraordinary Minds; The Link Between Savantism and Autism*. Retrieved from <https://spectrumnews.org/features/deep-dive/extraordinary-inds-the-link-between-savantism-and-autism/>

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