

Educating about the Spectrum

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Objectives

- What is autism?
- Student Development Theories
- Challenges facing students on the spectrum
- Ways to support students
- Recommendations
- Budget

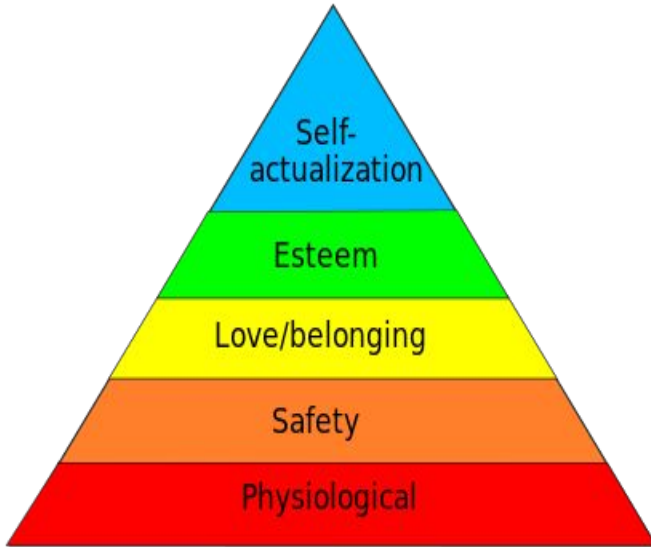
What is Autism?

- Is a generalized term for a group of complex disorders of brain development
 - Disorders are characterized, in varying degrees- by difficulties in social interaction, verbal and nonverbal communication and repetitive behaviors. (Autism Speaks, 2016)
- SARAH PUT THE OTHER DEFINITION

Fast Facts

- One in Sixty-Eight American children are on the autism spectrum. (Autism Speaks, 2016)
- Autism is four to five times more common among boys than girls (Autism Speaks, 2016).
- Only 30 percent of high school graduates with autism attend a two or four year college (Finnegan & Finnegan, 2016)
- 80 percent of those students do not graduate from college (Finnegan & Finnegan, 2016)

Theory- Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



- Maslow (1943) stated “that people are motivated to achieve certain needs and that some needs take precedence over others”(as cited in McLeod, 2016).
- One must satisfy the lower level first before progressing on to meet higher level growth needs.
- Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs can be applied to students that are on the Autism Spectrum as they have to feel emotionally and physically safe and accepted within the classroom environment in order to reach full potential.
- In order to feel safe in the classroom, and at the institution as a whole, faculty and staff must create a supportive environment otherwise, students will not progress and become a fully functioning person.

Schlossberg's Transition Theory

- Situation (Schlossberg, 1981)
 - Triggers and timing
 - Students may process information in fits and starts
 - Amount of control
 - Stress
 - transition
- Self (Schlossberg, 1981)
 - Personal characteristics
 - Psychological resources
- Support (Schlossberg, 1981)
 - Family, friends, institutions
 - Have more ability to assist in this area of the transition
 - Faculty, Staff, Student support
- Strategies (Schlossberg, 1981)
 - Coping responses
 - action/inaction
 - Reframing
 - self-care

Challenges Students on the Spectrum Face

- Adreon & Durocher (2007) stated, “specific challenges faced by students with learning disabilities include difficulty with academic content, organization, time management, and study skills” (p.274).
 - Students on the Autism spectrum might find it difficult to decide what type of college to attend, learning independent living skills, disclosing their disability to peers and professors, and identifying a support system and strategies to assist them in adjusting to the college environment (Adreon et.al., 2007).
- Van Hees, Moyson, and Roeyers (2014) describe the “lack of structure” that students struggle coping with during their transition (p.1678) and the tiring “necessary social contacts” (p.1679)
 - Students attempt to create structure but find it difficult in how higher education is set up
 - Social contact is necessary in many forms in higher education

Ways to Support Students on the Spectrum

- Counseling, Modifications in Classroom, Evaluation and Testing, Social Functioning, and Mental Health Support are all ways that student affairs professional, faculty, staff, and students can support students on the autism spectrum (VanBergeijk, Klin, Volkmar, 2008).
- Peer training and support models have been shown to be effective among college-aged students on campuses (Krohn & Goetz 2005, Tevyaw, Borsari, Colby, & Monti, 2007).
- An awareness program among faculty and staff to break down fallacies and create more insight into Autism (VanHees, Moyson, & Roeyers, 2014)

Our Recommendations

- Workshop created by the Disabilities Services to be distributed and utilized by all aspects of campus
 - Facilitated by volunteers from (that list)
- Can be catered to different offices, organizations, staff, etc.
- Workshops would explore:
 - Signs of Autism and General Information to raise awareness
 - Challenges and strengths students experience
 - General ways to include students on autism spectrum more on campus
 - Specific plans created by participants that their specific area can make changes
 - Students can learn peer training and support models
 - Faculty can learn how to make classrooms more conducive

Budget Considerations

- No new staff needed
 - time would be required from facilitation volunteer and
- Spaces on campus for workshops
- Printing for advertisement and information sheets

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