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Collaborating Institutions and Agencies: SDSU, RCHSD, UCSD, Dept of Rehabilitation (DOR), San Diego Regional Center (SDRC), National Foundation for Autism Research (NFAR), Options for All, Partners with Industry, College 2 Career, SDSU Workability

Community Identified Need: Our research-community collaborative group, ACHIEVE (Active Collaborative Hub for Individuals with Autism to Enhance Vocational and Educational outcomes), identified a significant need to improve the employment outcomes for individuals with Autism. **15% of adults with ASD are employed! 14% job retention over 18 months.**

- Vocational “Soft Skills” were noted as particularly difficult and research indicates the greatest cause of job obtainment and job loss. 90% impaired
- Lack of evidence-based interventions developed and used for adults in Vocational settings
- Large increases in population of young adults with ASD; **500,000 new autistic adults**

Development of SUCCESS: SUCCESS was developed with the research-community collaborative group by adapting and integrating concepts from 2 evidence-based treatments for other populations: 1. Compensatory Cognitive Training (Beth Twamley et al-schizophrenia/SMI) and 2. Social Thinking and Social Behavior Mapping (Michelle Garcia-Winner, Pamela Crooke- children with ASD/DD).

Target Skills:

- * Executive Functioning skills (Prospective Memory, Attention, Working Memory, Retrieval, Cognitive Flexibility, Problem-Solving, Goal Oriented Thinking, Contextual Awareness)
- * Social Cognitive and Communication skills (Perspective-taking, Social Action Evaluations, Emotional Awareness & Regulation, Professional Conversations, Casual Conversations, Establishing Working Relationships, Using Help/Compliments/Feedback, Social Networking, Social Media Use, Self-Advocacy)

Intervention Delivered: Within Vocational Training Program

- * 26 weeks in length
- * 1.5 hr 1 x per week (2 hrs for lower functioning) group
- * Adults 18 + (post high school)
- * Small group 4-8 participants
- * Psychoeducational group with hands on experiences and weekly practice assignments “Try It and Apply Its”

Research Study: Multiple studies have been conducted to date to test feasibility, acceptability and effectiveness of Employment SUCCESS

- NFAR funded: Study 1: Open Trial n=100 18-42 yrs , Community location: NFAR Tech program
- NIMH funded: Study 2: Pilot RCT Trial n=39 18-43 yrs , Community location: Options for All, PWI, C2C, SDSU Workability

Outcomes to Date: Both studies collected proximal (skills) and distal outcomes (functioning & employment).

- Increased Executive Functioning Skills (self-reported, parent reported, staff reported and observed performance ratings)
- Increased Social Skills (self-reported, parent reported, staff reported and observed performance ratings)
- Reduced Mental Health symptoms (self-reported and parent reported)
- Increased Daily Living Skills (self-reported and parent reported)
- Improved Employment- 43-68% obtained work, 100% motivated to work, 88% sustained/gained hrs