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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE

Pennsylvania Autism Needs Assessment

A Survey of Individuals and Families
Living with Autism

Report #6: Employment Challenges

Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare

Bureau of Autism Services

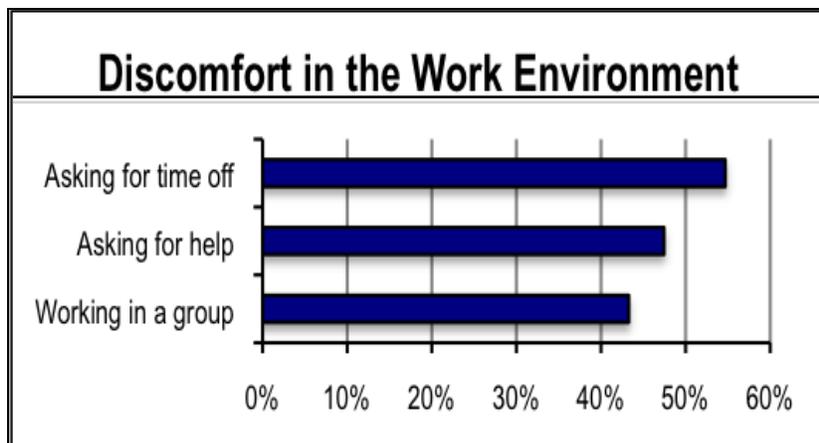
Pennsylvania Autism Needs Assessment:

A Survey of Individuals and Families Living with Autism

Employment Challenges

Interacting with Colleagues in the Workplace

- ◆ Only about 25% of employed individuals with autism who responded to the survey for themselves are open about their autism diagnosis in the workplace.
- ◆ Almost 70% feel some type of discomfort interacting with their peers and authority figures in the workplace. Many individuals with autism feel uncomfortable asking for time off (55%), asking for help (48%) and working in groups (43%).



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Recommendations

1. Develop accessible employment services that address the specific challenges faced by adults with autism in the workplace.

Adults with autism often have highly specialized skills, can be especially focused in their work life, and can be highly reliable and valued employees. The challenges they face are often in the domains of social interactions with supervisors, colleagues and customers. Effective vocational services for adults with autism would address these challenges and help them find appropriate employment sites, create resumes, perform well during the interview process, and maintain success once employment is secured.

2. Support individuals with autism in the workplace so they can maintain employment.

Individuals with autism may continue to need support in order to maintain employment. On-the-job supports for adults with autism can help bridge the social and communication challenges that affect workplace performance.

3. Create opportunities for dialogue with potential employers about the benefits of hiring individuals with autism.

It is important to gain an understanding of the needs of potential employers, and how to educate those employers on the benefits of hiring individuals with autism. These benefits include decreased hiring and training costs, as well as increased retention, productivity, efficiency, and above average adherence to safety procedures and attendance. Internships and alternative work arrangements, such as telecommuting, could be other useful mechanisms to help individuals with autism gain and maintain employment.



For Employment data findings, please visit the ASERT website www.paautism.org/asert or contact your regional ASERT Collaborative:

- ◆ Eastern Region: 1-877-408-0154
- ◆ Western Region: 412-235-5484
- ◆ Central Region: 1-877-231-4244

We encourage you to review the complete series of reports, and data by geographic region for each topic: *Statewide Snapshot, Service Needs, Barriers to Accessing Services, Unwanted Outcomes, Diagnosis, Employment Challenges, and Family Impact.*