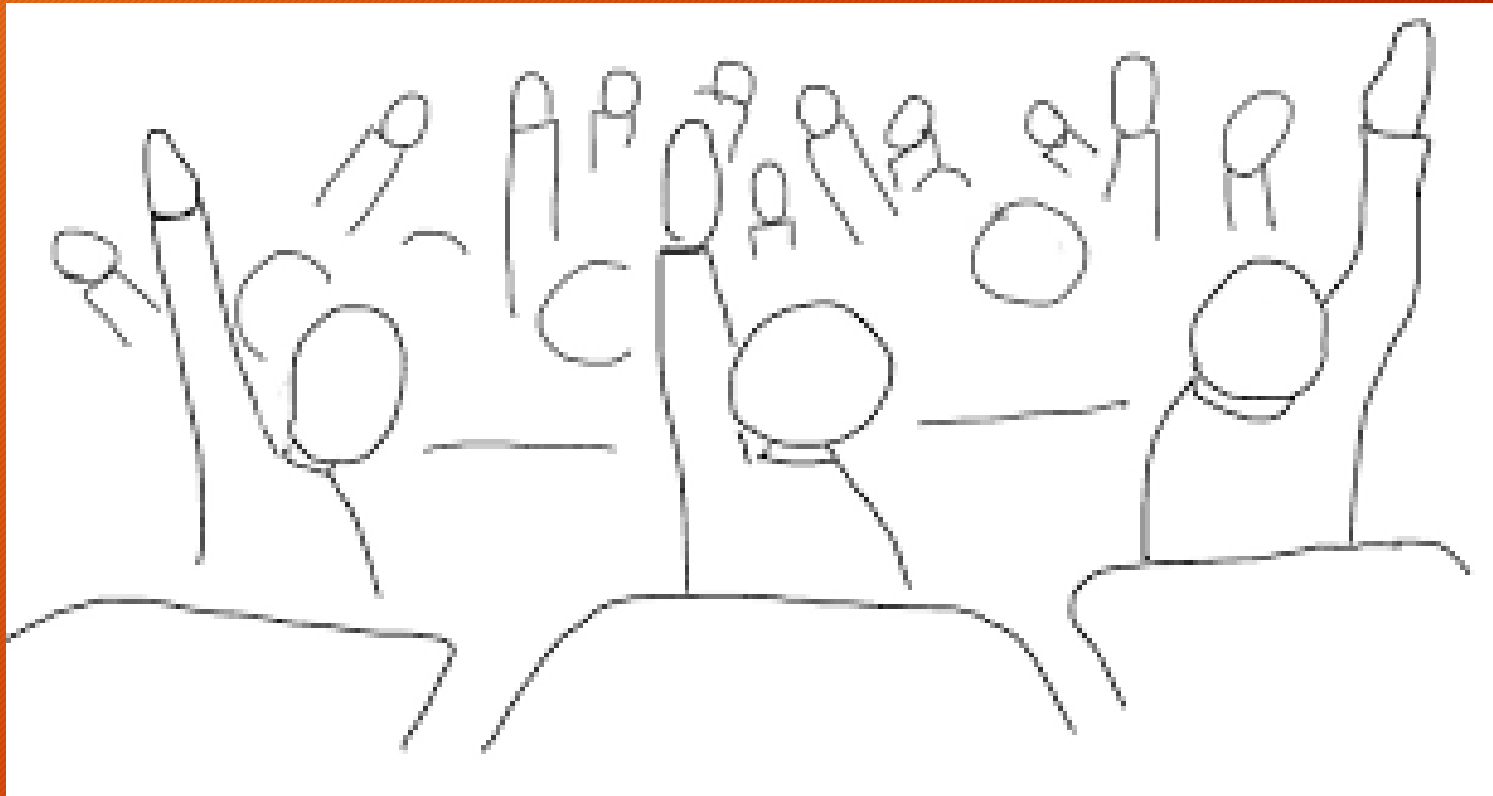




What's so Different About Autism, Anyways?

Sarah Taylor - Next Level ASD Consulting/Spectrum Advantage
Cannexus 2019

What do you know about ASD?



Biography

- Over 20 years in Autism Treatment
- 10 of those years as a Psychometrist and Behavioural Consultant.
- Specializing in assessment of children, consultation to families and School boards.
- Past five years running an employment initiative to help get people living on the spectrum appropriately employed.
- Consulting neurodiversity support to companies and HR teams.



The Memorable Job Interview

Two important things happened:
That are relevant and important to the
future of Autism and Employment.

1) Workplace cultural shift

2) A personal and professional epiphany



Workplace Cultural Shift - 1996



Changes in interview questions and styles; specifically, the addition of behavioral scenario questions

Emphasis on social vs. technical skills



Statement by a Scientist Living on the Spectrum

"I was totally baffled by the interviewer's seemingly strong interest in my relationship with the difficult people in my life, I had been prepared to answer any question that she wanted to ask about my research work and the technical challenges that I had overcome in getting to this point in my life."

Epiphany

- * All children except Peter Pan, grow up.
 - 98% of marketing, information and research and resources for people on the autism spectrum is directed towards children.
 - Autism is about 10 times as prevalent today as it was in the 1980's
 - Most recent stats say 1 in 59* children is diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.



Which of these employees lives on the spectrum?



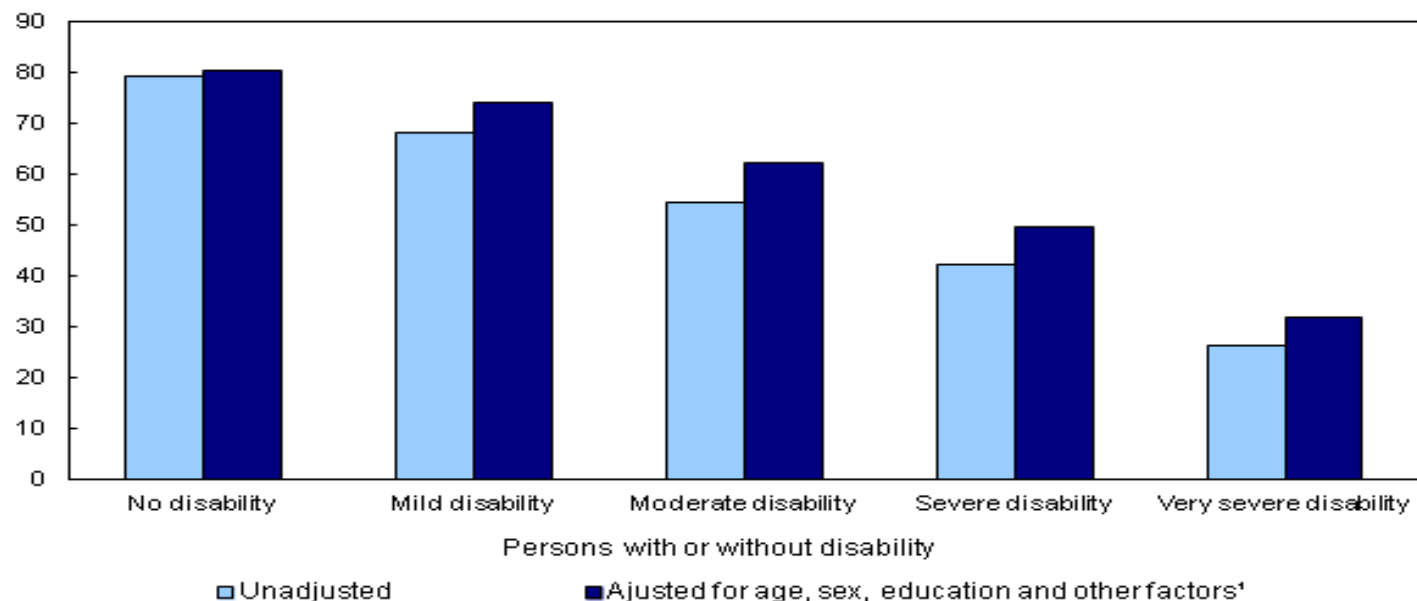
Autism and Employment



Employment and Disability

Chart 1
Employment rate of persons with or without a disability, unadjusted and adjusted, 2011

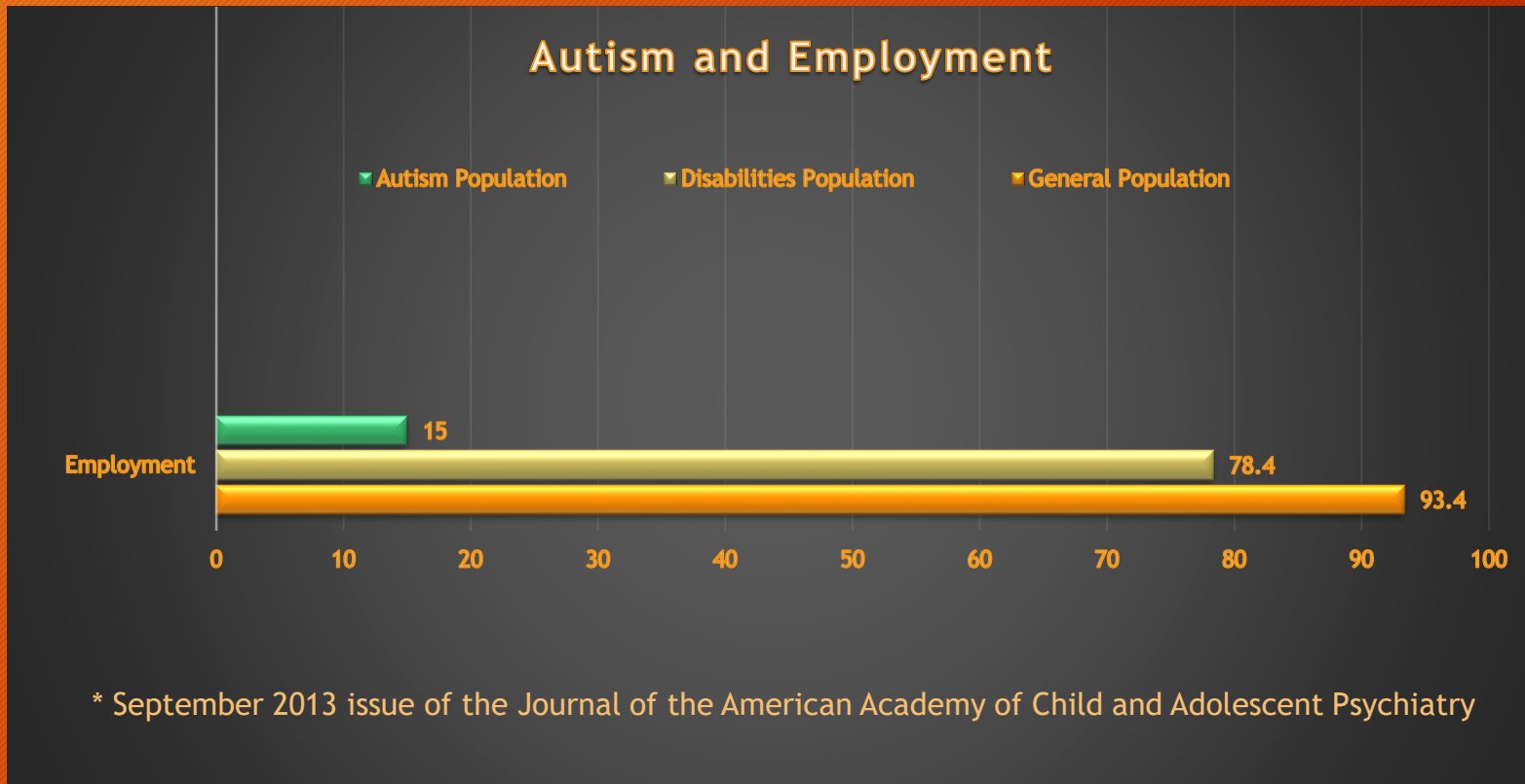
percentage



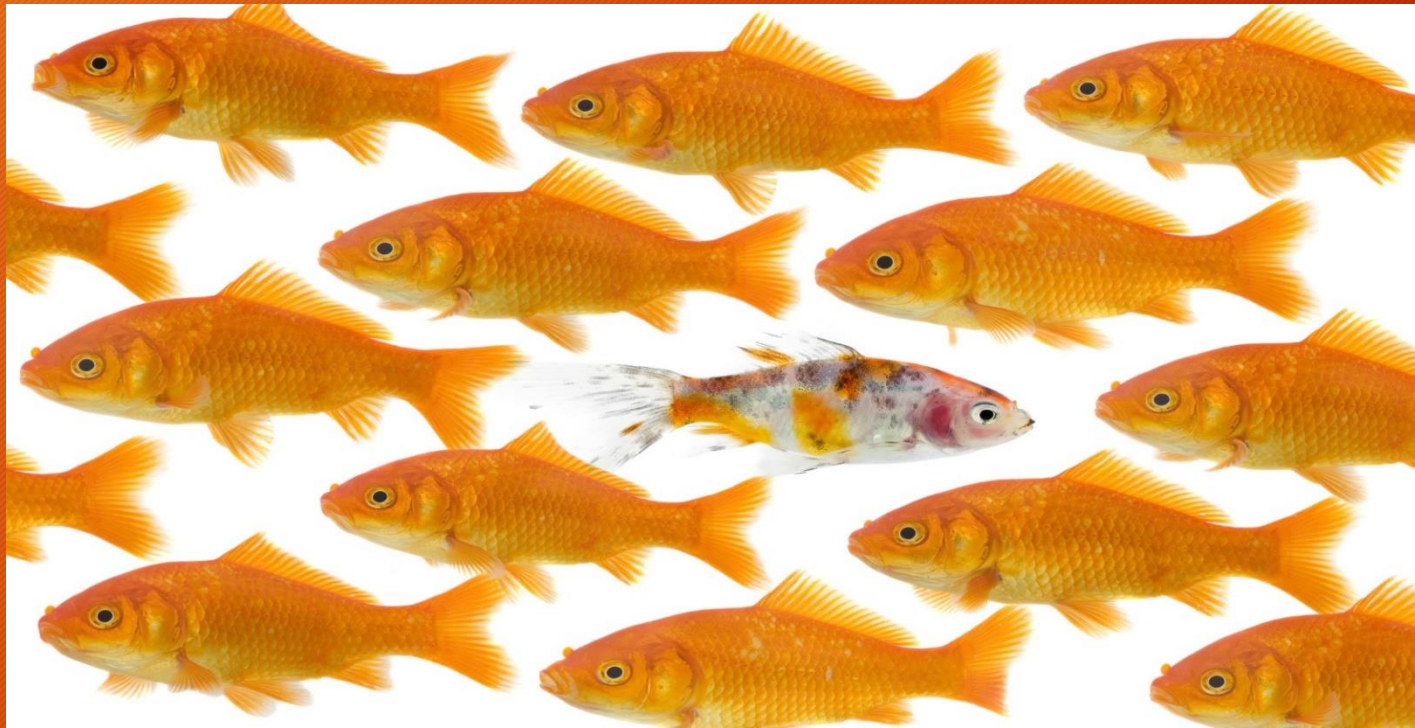
1. Results were obtained from a logistic regression that included the following factors: severity of disability, sex, age group, level of education, Aboriginal self-identification, province of residence and living arrangements.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2012.

Employment and Autism



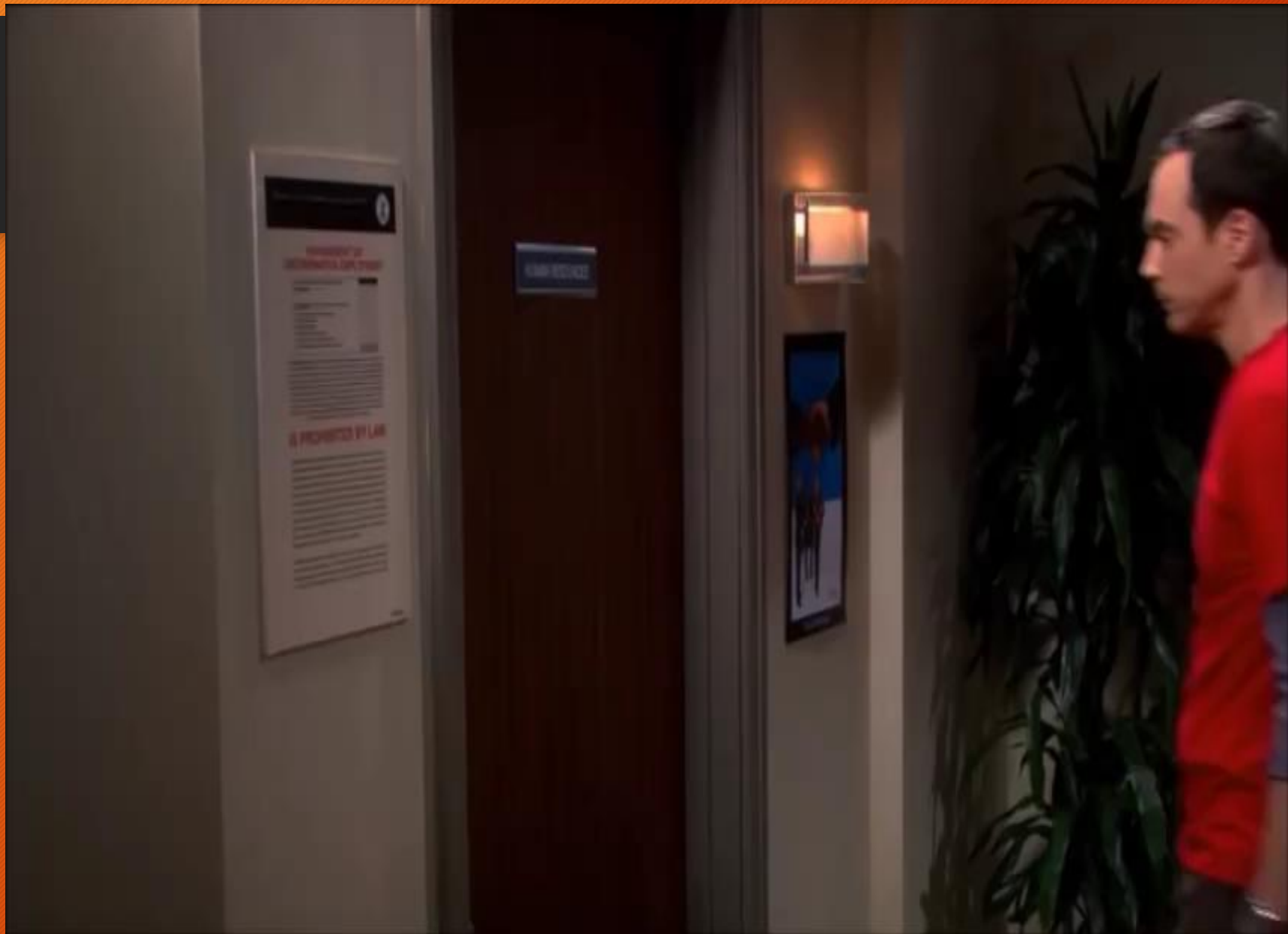
What's so different about ASD?



Workplace Cultural Shift

- The emphasis on social vs. technical skills
- Finding the “right fit” for the team
- Focus on EQ vs. IQ
- Changes in interview questions and styles
 - addition of behavioral scenario questions
 - If you were a fruit, what would you be and why?





Brain Development Differences

Experts on objects

	Autism Spectrum
Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning and sharing information • “Task” focus
Self-Esteem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accomplishment of specific goal or outcome (all details perfect)
Cognitive-Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • observe facts and details • Look for patterns • create rule or routine • Exceptions trigger curiosity • Difference as learning opportunity
Memory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge database of interesting or useful facts and areas of special interest • sequence of events related to a goal or outcome (rule or routine)
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concrete and literal • words have specific meaning • Honest in opinions & responses to questions regardless of person or situation • Details framed as paragraphs



Experts on people

	Neurotypical
Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social • “Team” focus
Self-Esteem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social status • validation of personal feelings
Cognitive-Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • generalized concept applied to situation • Creates “templates”, identify key facts and develop general concept to be applied in most situations • Adverse to exceptions, differences
Memory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • non-verbal gestures and resulting social and emotional outcomes
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception of person or situation determines level of honesty • expect listener to use context and non-verbal cues to interpret message • stories are important communication tools

The Challenge of Invisible Disability #1

Lack of tolerance for
differences that we
cannot see



The Challenge of Invisible Disability #2



STIGMA

Fear/discomfort around
disclosure

The challenge of invisible disability #3

Communication challenges can often be mistaken for behaviour challenges



Common Job Seeking Barriers in ASD

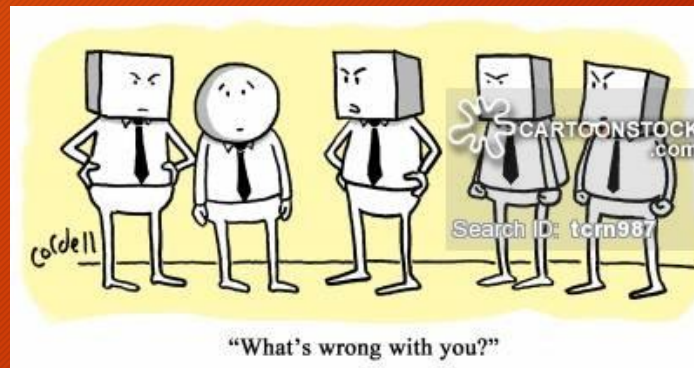
Interviewing for jobs



Applying for jobs



Assimilating into work culture



ASD Barriers to Applying for Jobs

- Perfectionism struggles -
 - 100 percent of qualifications
 - Too narrow a search
 - No location flexibility
 - Only perfect position
 - Anxiety driven decisions
- Too literal on resume
- Key words
- All or nothing with applications
- Lack of motivation



Communication barrier - Actual example

- > Submitted on Friday, May 19, 2017 - 1:52pm Submitted by anonymous user: [108.173.183.138] Submitted values are:
 - >
 - >
 - > I turned down a job's program before, I know, but I need help with something related to autism, Executive Dysfunction. It's honestly the root cause of many of my mental health problems and...I'm getting desperate.
 - >
 - > I don't need help with social skills, I'm more or less borderline normal in that regard. But this...it makes me spin my wheels without going anywhere. I don't care what it takes, therapy or medication. I just need for the future to be clear for me. I need my present to build up to a future worth having.
 - >
 - > P.S: Hire someone to answer your phone. Heck, I'll take that job.
 - >
 - >

Case Study

7 minutes

Each group come up with 3 accommodations/recommendations that are going to improve the individual's outcomes

Case Study #1 - John



- **A wizard at data analytics.** His combination of mathematical abilities and software development skill is highly unusual. His CV features two Master's Degrees, both with honours. John has been working for a software testing company for 3 months but prior to getting this position, he was unemployed for just over 3 years. Despite his skill set, he just couldn't seem to make it through the hiring process.
- When you watch John for a while, you start to see why. He often covers his ears with his hands and complains about noises that no one else hears. And often, his coworkers are not sure if he is directing these complaints to them or if he is talking to himself out loud.
- Most coworkers find conversation with John a little uncomfortable because he displays very little facial affect or expression in his voice. John never initiates a greeting, and a lot of the time when a co-worker greets him, he doesn't respond. Conversation partners often wonder if John heard them, if he understood the joke or comment, or if he is ok. John rarely, if ever looks directly at the person he is talking to. When he does make eye contact, John stares directly at his conversation partner for long periods of time without blinking. Coworkers find it unsettling to talk with someone so inscrutable.
- John's boss is slightly frustrated with the fact that John spends a lot of time obsessing over his shoes. He ties and re-ties his shoelaces constantly. Every 10 minutes or so, John leans over and checks his shoelaces. He claims that he can't focus if they are untied. During meetings, John spends so much time with his shoelaces, it appears he is not listening to anything that is being discussed. His coworkers feel that John is procrastinating and wasting company time. However, there is no denying that when John's shoes are tied to his exacting specifications, he is the most productive employee in the department. He is hard working and would rather stay at his desk than take a lunch break.

Case Study #2 - Logan



Meet Logan, Logan graduated from his University with top honours and an undergraduate degree in Geomatics Engineering. From the time that he was a young child, Logan always loved anything geomatics related. His mother reports that from the time that he was 6 years old, he knew that he was going to be a Geomatics engineer. In school, Logan studied hard and took more courses than necessary to achieve extraordinary results. He was the student others would go to for help on exams and assignments. Everyone was sure that he would get snapped up by an engineering firm immediately upon graduation.

However, it has been three years since Logan graduated and he has not received a single job offer. In fact, he has not even had an interview. Recently Logan has sought the aid of an employment counsellor to help him land a role in his field. His counsellor has noticed that Logan faithfully attends his appointments and usually shows up at least 30 minutes early.

Logan has also taken all suggestions to revamp his resume and CV, and has spent many hours making edits. He carefully crafts coverletters and keeps detailed spreadsheets of all the companies that he intends to apply to, however, Logan seems stuck when it come to actually applying for a job.

Whenever he sees a posting that seems like a good fit, Logan finds something wrong with the job, a reason he can't apply, be it an article that he read in the paper about the district the company is located in, a negative story he heard from a passing stranger or the hours required on Monday would interfere with his Dungeons and Dragons group. Whatever it is, somehow he never seems to actually apply for jobs, in fact when his counsellor probes, she finds that Logan has only applied for 2 jobs since he graduated for University.

Case Study #3



Since completing her diploma in Business Administration 6 months ago, Cindy has applied for approximately 130 jobs, been on 42 interviews and received 0 job offers.

Upon a first meeting with Cindy her inconsistent eye contact is really noticeable. It is difficult to feel a sense of connection with someone who doesn't look at their conversation partner. Cindy also has trouble establishing a connection with her conversation partner using small talk. She hates to talk about the weather and lacks interest in sports.

Cindy also tends to begin interactions with others by saying "Greetings" rather than with a more common "Hi or Hello", this tendency, paired with her unusually quiet voice volume have all provided insight about some of the interview challenges that may be holding Cindy back. However, Cindy is completely closed to the idea of disclosing her invisible disability in a job interview. Her past experiences of bullying and trauma have led her to believe that disclosure creates more challenges in her life and people will think that she is stupid or incapable if she tells them she lives on the spectrum.

Strategies for Application Success

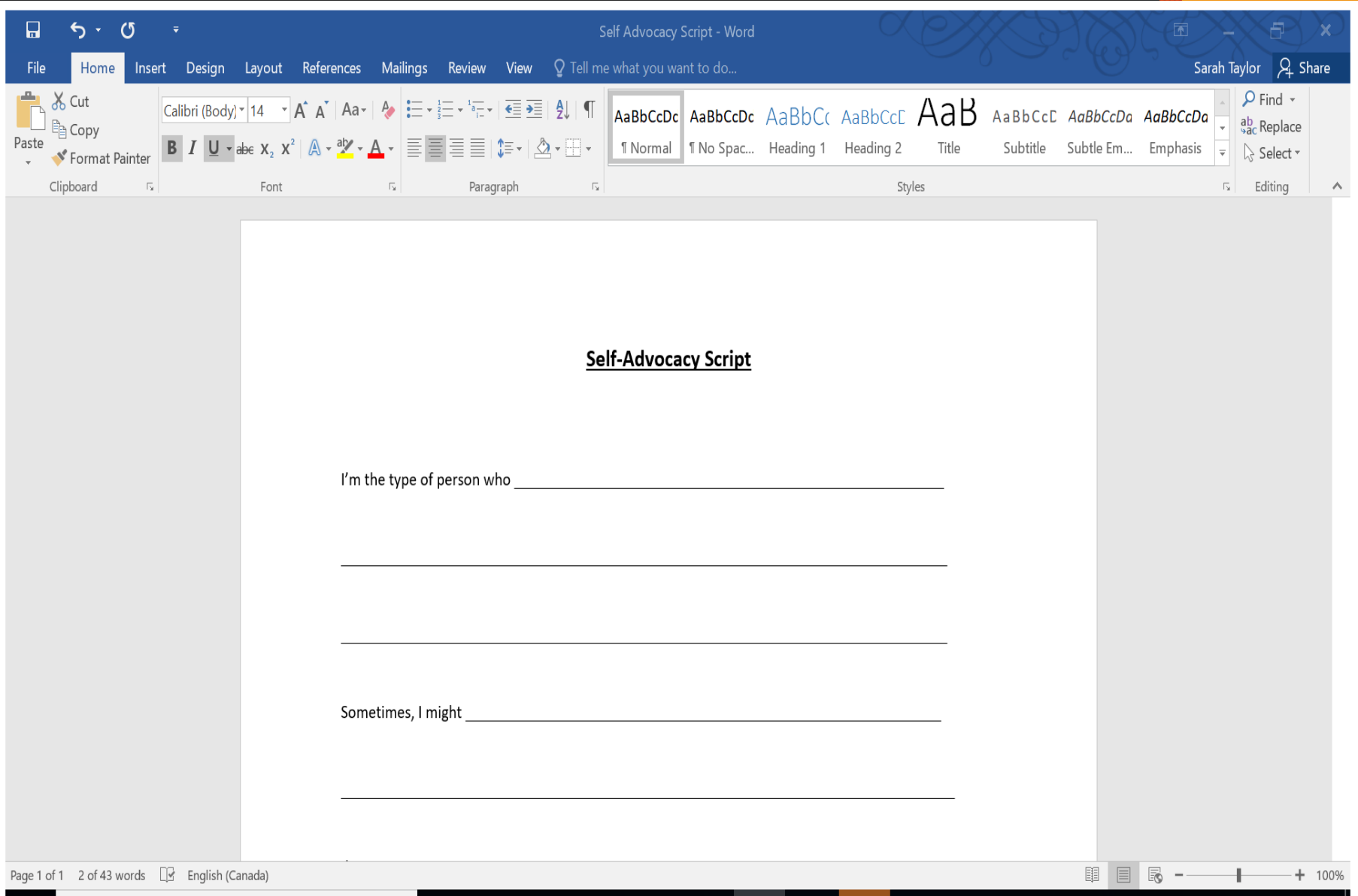
- Productivity Targets
- 2/3rds rule
- Survival versus Career Jobs
- Target and Key words
- Discomfort Spectrum
- Standard resume
- Cover letter template



Strategies for Interview Success

- Practise, practise, practise.
 - Record and review footage with individual
- Create self advocacy script for behaviours that the individual cannot control
 - “I’m the type of person who...”
- Create answer scripts for commonly asked questions
- Create a script of questions to ask at the end of an interview that can be used repeatedly.
- Provide a ‘formula’ for answering behavioral scenario questions





Self-Advocacy Script

I'm the type of person who _____

Sometimes, I might _____

If All Else Fails or even if it doesn't...

Don't be afraid to ask for help



Professionals may have insight that you lack.

- In Alberta, the DRES Disability Related Supports government program will cost-share the fees for job coaching support with an employer

Depression Awareness Tattoo



It appears
one way to
the
outsider ...

Depression Awareness Tattoo - 2

... but
totally
different
to the one
who wears
it.



Available



LIVE WEBINAR TRAINING

**THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT
PROFESSIONAL'S GUIDE TO
UNDERSTANDING ASD**

Monday February 11, 2019 - 12:00 noon MST

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