

## **T. Scott Smith Consulting**

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# **Promoting Self-Advocacy and Autonomy in College Students with Autism**

## *Educational Brochure for Parents*

### **Overview**

Self-advocacy and autonomy are essential skills for college students with autism and are strongly linked to academic persistence, emotional well-being, and future employment success. In college, students are expected to understand their needs, communicate effectively, and make informed decisions related to academics, health, and daily living.

Parents play an important role in fostering these skills by encouraging independence while remaining available for guidance. Supporting self-advocacy helps students build confidence and prepares them for adult responsibilities beyond college.

### **Key Components of Self-Advocacy and Autonomy**

- Understanding personal strengths, challenges, and support needs
- Communicating needs clearly to faculty and campus staff
- Making informed decisions and accepting natural consequences
- Managing personal responsibilities such as scheduling and follow-through
- Understanding rights and responsibilities related to disability accommodations

### **Parent Support Checklist**

- ✓ Encourage your student to speak directly with faculty and staff
- ✓ Practice self-advocacy conversations in low-pressure situations
- ✓ Allow your student to experience manageable challenges and problem-solve
- ✓ Support decision-making rather than directing outcomes
- ✓ Reinforce responsibility for accommodations and support follow-up

## Recommendations for Parents

Parents are encouraged to balance emotional support with opportunities for independence. Resisting the urge to intervene immediately allows students to develop resilience and confidence. When challenges significantly impact academic or vocational progress, consultation with campus professionals or vocational rehabilitation services may provide additional support.

## For More Information

For individualized guidance, transition planning, or vocational rehabilitation services related to college students with autism, please contact:

**Dr. T. Scott Smith**

Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

[collegeandautism.com](http://collegeandautism.com)

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