

Planning for Success at College For Students On the Autism Spectrum

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Students with ASD:

Heterogeneous group

The “umbrella” includes:

“Classic” Autism

Asperger’s Syndrome

Pervasive Developmental Disorder (NOS) (referred to as atypical autism)

PDD

includes Childhood Disintegrative Disorder

Rett Syndrome

Students with ASD:

Comprise a growing segment of the population

Prevalence rising 6% to 15% each year (CDC)

Current estimates place prevalence in the population at close to 1 in 59 individuals (higher for boys, lower for girls) (CDC 2018)

About 50% of students with ASD but without Intellectual disabilities (ID) pursue post-secondary education

The numbers of students with ASD (with or without ID) who choose some kind of post-secondary option is growing every year.

ADA and IDEA respectively require:

That a student is not discriminated against because of ASD,

AND

for a student referred to special education, an individualized education plan is created to address educational, social, behavioral, psychological, and transitional needs of a student.

High functioning students with ASD might not qualify for special education services, and instead interventions might be delivered through a response to intervention (RTI) framework

What exactly constitutes appropriate accommodations within high school for students with ASD through ADA accommodations or through an IEP?

How exactly are interventions for students with ASD implemented within that RTI framework?

First question, there is actually a strong body of research to support remedial and accommodation strategies

However, no set “equation” or plan to follow

Second question, not as clear

RTI should provide appropriate interventions for academic AND behavioral/emotional issues for students.

Often, the behavioral/emotional component is less formal, or unfortunately, ignored. It is the meeting of these two kinds of interventions, academic and behavioral/emotional, that are key for students on the spectrum.

Things will change dramatically for for your family as you transition to post-secondary education

No IDEA, so no IEP

No RTI framework for interventions at different levels

ADA accommodations are specific and limited

Students are required to be strong self-advocates

In other words, in precisely those areas in which students on the spectrum struggle, they must now competently master to secure their opportunities for the accommodations that can be provided at the post-secondary institution they choose to attend.

So, good luck with that!

RISKS:

Heightened risk for academic and personal failure (Pinder-Amaker 2014)

Decreased rates of graduation and employment (Shattuck, et al. 2012)

More likely to develop psychopathological disorders (Friedman et al. 2013)

Challenges frequently reported include:

Difficulties with social skills

Interpersonal deficits

Organizational and time management difficulties

Lack of self-advocacy skills

Sensory overload

Meeting academic demands (all from Hees et al. 2015)

Students Report that They Struggle:

With new situations and unexpected changes

With the necessary but difficult social contacts

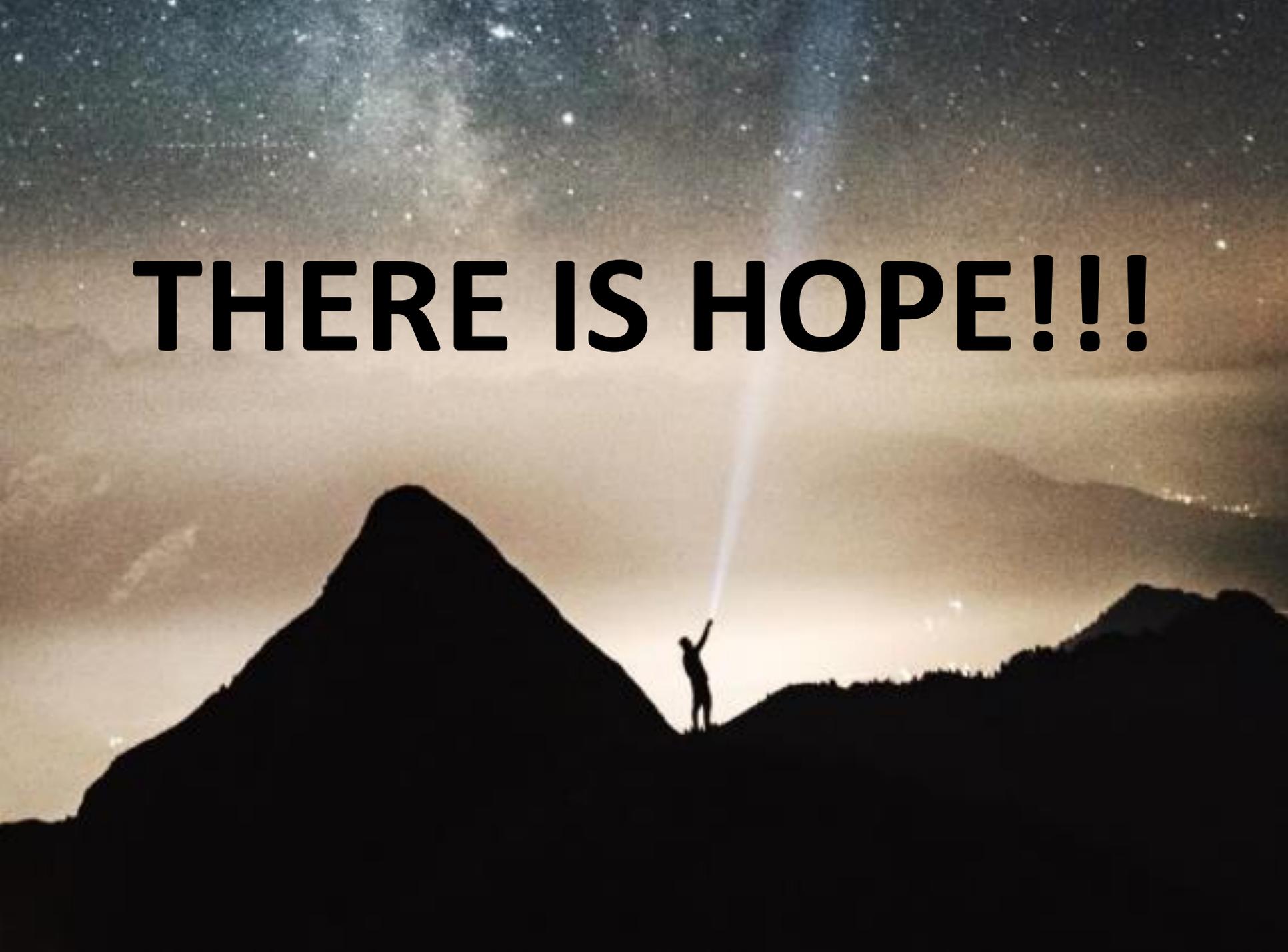
With processing information and time management

With greater expectations and harder workload

With how to disclose information about their needs

With mental health issues—*anxiety, depression*

THERE IS HOPE!!!



Actions to Take NOW:

Develop a strong transitional IEP or plan for your student

Access resources and personnel to advise you on your options•

Communicate with the appropriate staff at your school and at the institutions you have chosen, and ask them the key questions*

Visit those institutions you have chosen, and sit down and bluntly discuss concerns and how that institution will address them

Continue to communicate and coordinate with your chosen institution's programs or services, to ensure they meet the expectations previously discussed.

•Options Available to YOU

Life skills training programs

College living experience programs

Trade or technical schools

Junior colleges

Four year colleges or universities

Specialized schools or programs

*KEY QUESTIONS

What are we doing right now to prepare for the transition to post-secondary education?

What can I do, myself, personally, now, to ready myself for this transition?

What are my options for post-secondary education?

Why, how, when, and with whom should I schedule a visit?

What is the application process like for most colleges? Is it different for students with ASD? What information will they need?

What are admission criteria?

What kinds of services/programs are offered for students with ASD? Are there fee for service programs?

How many students are served by your disability office or program? How many students with my diagnosis?

How many full-time staff are employed at this office or program?

How do YOU provide (list the services and accommodations: test proctoring, tutoring, audiobooks, notetaking, remediation, supervision or case management, computer resources, advocacy, organizational assistance, resource management, counseling, medical and/or psychological services, other services)?

What is your average class size?

What are my choices for housing and roommates?

Support Recommendations

(Anderson et al. 2018; Burgstahler et al. 2015; Cox et al. 2017; Elias et al. 2017; Hees et al. 2015)

Recommendation 1: A Personalized Approach

Recommendation 2: A Safe and Transparent Environment
with Sufficient Planning and Clear
Communication

Recommendation 3: Academic Accommodation

Recommendation 4: Support in Education, Student Life, and
Daily Living

Recommendation 5: Adequate Psychosocial Support

Recommendation 6: Leisure Activities and Rest

Program Types Available to YOU

There are a variety of options for disability support at two and four year institutions:

Mandated services

- Typical disability office

- Required by ADA

- Reasonable accommodations standard

- Different at each institution

- No additional cost

Comprehensive services

- Exceeds required services

- Best practices model

 - Exclusive to inclusive models

 - Center-based to campus-based models

 - Independent service to integrated service models

 - Publically-funded to privately-funded models

- Different at each institution

- Additional fees for specialized services

Specialized Services at Achieve

Model: Center-based inclusive

Scope of Program

- Mission

- Model of fee-for-service

- Expansion

 - Larger facilities

 - More full-time professional staff

 - Student body

Success

- Data collection

- Measured by student retention

- Academic progress

- Graduation rates

- Reasons for attrition

- Student and parent satisfaction

- Long term institutionalization of more specialized services

- Development of similar programs

Specialized Services at Achieve

Support Services for students with ASD include:

ALL other academic services available through Achieve, AND

Intensive staff supervision

Social behavior modeling

Organizational support, time management and prioritization of goals

Partnership with other services on campus for specialized

- Social counseling and supervision

- On call emergency counseling

- Training in social pragmatics

- Peer interaction group counseling

Coordination with the disability support services office

Coordination with other student services, counseling, housing, etc.

Service accountability

In-service education

Community outreach

Sensitivity training

Achieve Program What We Do:

Comprehensive Program

LD, ADHD, and high functioning students with ASD

Best Practices model versus a legal compliance model

Human-centered services

Case management

Coaching

Support Specialists

Mentoring

Organization

Transition

Individualized, high staff to student ratio

Integrated social support within the academic model

Campus-wide services in a center-based model

Coordination with other service providers

Feedback among parents and other stakeholders

Systems for accountability

Achieve Program What We Don't:

Our Comprehensive Program Does Not Provide:

- Support for severe ASD

- Specialized life skills training

- Medication monitoring and prescription maintenance

- Restricted or “special” classes

- Specialized living arrangements

- Intensive behavioral/remedial therapy

- Professional counseling for mental health issues

- Regular organized recreational activities

- Continuous supervision

Thank you!

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