

## WATCH US GROW!

In the Fall of 2018, MAVS will be teaching the PEERS Program to a dozen area High School Groups!

### FEATURED ASSOCIATE:

Meredith Sinclair,  
M.S., CRC

Meredith holds a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from Georgia State University. She is a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor and a Certified PEERS for Young Adults Provider. Her specialty is in working with adults with disabilities, as well as their families and caregivers. She is currently the owner and director of LIFE Behavior Consulting, LLC – a service provider to MAVS clients who specifically work on Personal/Social Adjustment Training with individual clients and within PEERS groups, as well as Job Readiness Training.



Stress Management for

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## Stress Management for Job Interviews Written by C. Ohayagha

You just received a 'congratulations' letter announcing that you have been chosen for a new job position. All of the initial apprehension and anxiety in preparing for the interview has passed, and you are now on your way to a new career. Reflecting on the process from when the invitation to interview was received to sitting face to face with one, maybe multiple, interviewers can bring about some stress responses. The body's reaction is usually the primary indicator of your level of stress. Stress can cause physical and psychological pressure on a person. Typical responses to stress include: upset stomach, tightness in the chest, and the well-known feelings of nervousness and anxiousness. The best way to turn the distress you may feel about a looming job interview into positive stress, or eustress, is by stress management. Use those stress responses you may be experiencing as a motivator for optimal performance during the interview

by identifying the useful and welcoming aspects of stress. Here are 5 helpful tips to manage your stress for any job interview:

*Systematic Desensitization:* This technique involves imagining or acting out an anxiety-provoking scene (in small steps) while practicing relaxation techniques. If you are feeling anxious about interview day, imagine yourself waking up, getting dressed, driving to the interview location, and sitting in the waiting room. After every anxiety producing step, take a few deep breaths.

*Relabeling:* Giving the anxiety-provoking event a new label. If the idea of going to a job interview makes you anxious, tell yourself that you are going to a meeting. You may have to present some material so be prepared. This scenario may also produce stress, but it is far less intense and you may feel more comfortable.

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## What is a Comprehensive Vocational Evaluation?

CVE services provide an individualized, timely, and systematic process by which a person seeking employment, in partnership with an evaluator, learns to identify viable vocational options and develop employment goals and objectives. A CVE will include a pre-evaluation assessment of assistive technology needs, functional performance inventory, interview, psychometric testing, personality testing, interest inventories, and other appropriate evaluation tests, depending on the individual.

*Contact MAVS if you know an individual who could benefit from a Comprehensive Vocational Evaluation.*



## Stress Management for Job Interviews, Continued...

*Self-talk:* Ask yourself questions that will help you focus on the positive aspects of the event that provokes anxiety. For example, you may ask yourself if there is a real risk in the anxiety-producing event. Odds are that real risk and danger is not a significant amount.

*Thought stopping:* Being aware of the moments when you have anxious thoughts, stopping that thought, and shifting your thoughts to another event. Relaxation techniques pairs well with this strategy. When you find yourself having negative thoughts about your upcoming interview, recognize those thoughts, and tell yourself that you will no longer

allow these thoughts to continue. Follow up by relaxing your muscles and taking five deep breaths.

*Reduce uncertainty:* Engage in behaviors to increase your preparedness for the interview. Learn as much as you can about your potential new company. One example is to ask who would be your interviewer/s and inquire about their position names. Practice; Engage in mock interview sessions with family or friends to help you feel at ease on the big day. Lastly, map out the route you will take to reach your destination and the average travel time.

Remember, stress does not have to be a bad thing all the time. Channel those feelings into positive stress by engaging in stress management techniques.

Self-care is important, so be sure to be good to yourself. Be confident in yourself and rock your interview!



## What is PEERS?

### **Our group classes follow the Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills (PEERS®) for Young Adults.**

PEERS is a 16-week evidence-based social skills intervention for motivated young adults, who are interested in learning skills to make and keep friends and develop romantic relationships. During each group session, young adults are taught important social skills and are given the opportunity to practice these skills. The groups support those diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder or other social disorders who have difficulty with peer interactions and relationships.

It has a strong evidence-base for use with adolescents and young adults with autism spectrum disorder, but is also appropriate for preschoolers, adolescents, and young adults with ADHD, anxiety, depression, and other socioemotional problems. During each group session, young adults are taught important social skill by didactic and role play models. They are given the opportunity to practice these skills in session while receiving individualized coaching from our clinical staff. Parents/Caregivers are taught how to assist their young adults in making and keeping friends by providing feedback

through social coaching during weekly socialization homework assignments.

Services are individualized and specifically designed to identify and reduce the barriers to employment for clients so that they can successfully gain and maintain employment. These services not only focus on teaching skills during the sessions, but also applying these skills to the real-world environments.

*Contact MAVS if you know an individual who could benefit from PEERS Classes.*

## PEERS Topics of Instruction:

How to find common interests by trading information

How to use appropriate conversational skills including starting and maintaining conversations

How to find sources of friends

How to appropriately use humor

How to enter and exit group conversations

How to handle rejection and direct or indirect bullying

How to organize and have successful get-togethers

Rules for forms of electronic communication

How to handle arguments and disagreements

Dating etiquette/skills

PEERS differs from other social skills programs in that it is:

Evidence-based

Includes parents

Is structured like a class and not a therapy group

Teaches ecologically valid social skills based on how socially successful individuals behave

Breaks down social skills into understandable steps taught in an effective way

Builds in the generalization of skills to “real life” settings and for the teen and young adult programs it teaches skills that transfer to the workplace.



### Did you know?

Approximately 15% of the world's population lives with some form of disability. Global data show that employment rates are lower for disabled men (53%) and disabled women (20%) than for non-disabled men (65%) and non-disabled women (30%).

Source: The World Health Organization

## Myth vs. Fact

Myth: There is nothing one person can do to help eliminate the barriers confronting people with disabilities. Fact: Everyone can contribute to change.

### You can help remove barriers by:

- ✓ Understanding the need for accessible parking and leaving it for those who need it
- ✓ Encouraging participation of people with disabilities in community activities by using accessible meeting and event sites
- ✓ Understanding children's curiosity about disabilities and people who have them
- ✓ Advocating a barrier-free environment
- ✓ Speaking up when negative words or phrases are used about disability
- ✓ Writing producers and editors a note of support when they portray someone with a disability as a "regular person" in the media
- ✓ Accepting people with disabilities as individuals capable of the same needs and feelings as yourself, and hiring qualified disabled persons whenever possible

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## Metro-Atlanta Vocational Solutions, LLC

PO Box 767672  
Roswell, GA 30076  
Phone: 678-770-6251  
[www.atlvoc.com](http://www.atlvoc.com)  
[www.facebook.com/atlvoc](https://www.facebook.com/atlvoc)