

## Florida State University

### Center for Autism and Related Disabilities

A Program for Interviewing Success for Adults with Asperger's Disorder and High Functioning Autism

## Our Target Audience

- Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD) Clients
- Between the ages of 16-35
- High Functioning Autism and Asperger's Disorder
- Male / Female
- Unemployed / Employed
- Any educational level



## WHAT IS "CARD"?

Florida State University  
Center for Autism  
And Related Disabilities



## Marketing the Class

- Advertise in weekly agency email newsletter
- Recruit from known client pool
- Referrals from Vocational Rehabilitation
- Word of mouth



## Why Did We Do This Class???



"They can do the job, but they just can't get past the interview."

## Class Retention

- Incentive-Class participants that attend all classes and necessary make-up classes earn a \$50.00 gift card to buy interview clothes
- E-mail reminders the day before class
- E-mail summaries the day after class
- Keeping class fresh, such as having guest speakers

## Attendance

1st Quarter Average

Attended	13
Missed	12
Made-Up	12

2nd Quarter Average

Attended	20
Missed	5
Made-Up	5

3rd Quarter Average

Attended	20
Missed	5
Made-Up	4

4th Quarter Average

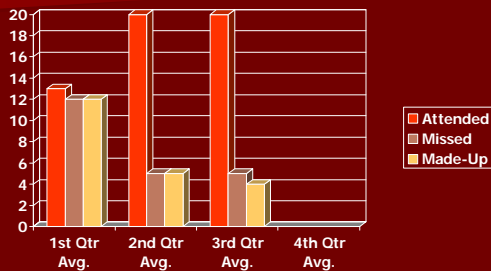
Attended	
Missed	
Made-Up	

## Curriculum Layout

- Set-up logically in the order that the interview takes place
- Allow for some flexibility
- Description of each topic and teaching methods



## Attendance



## Examples of Monthly Topic Description

September 2007

*The 1st Mock Interview* - These are practice interviews that you can perform with another person to determine your strengths and weaknesses in terms of your interview style and technique. This helps you better prepare for a real interview with an actual employer. For the purpose of this class, you will be interviewed by one of the instructors with questions provided by actual employers. These mock interviews will be videotaped and will only be used for your own viewing purposes. At the end of the year long course, you will have another mock interview by one of the actual employers that supplied the initial interview questions. While awaiting your turn to be interviewed, a short quiz will be completed on your knowledge of rehearsing for an interview, questions to consider to prepare for in an interview, and Equal Employment Opportunity Laws will be reviewed.

October 2007

*The Greeting* - This class will teach you how to greet and introduce yourself to the interviewer. There are several characteristics to a greeting that includes: eye contact, a handshake, body posture, giving your name, pleasantries, listening to the interviewer's greeting and what their name is, voice inflection, and facial expressions. The class will begin with a quiz to assess your knowledge of how to greet an employer. During the class we will compare an appropriate and inappropriate version of a greeting, watch videos about how to greet interviewers, perform role play of greetings, and also look at how body language and expressions can affect a first impression and can make or break an interview.

November 2007

*Small Talk* - Small talk is pleasantries that you may exchange with your interviewer that have nothing to do with the interview, but on topics that are a reflection of the interviewer's interests or recent events. For example, the interviewer may have awards for participating in certain charities displayed in their office or maybe the weather is a hot topic in the news. These are topics of conversation to "break the ice" and make everyone feel comfortable. Interviewers also like to see that others are observant and seem well-informed. The class will begin with a quiz to assess your knowledge of how to engage in small talk with an employer. During the class, we will watch videos that display appropriate small talk, compare what are appropriate topics of conversation, how long to engage in small talk, role play small talk scenarios, body language, eye contact, and other related characteristics.

## Teaching Methods

- PowerPoint-Visual learners
- Discussion-Auditory learners
- Games/Exercises-Group involvement
  - "The Orange Ball"
- Video-Visual learners
- Role Play-Comparison learning
  - The Wrong Way and the Right Way
- Guest Speakers-Outside motivation
- Consistency in class arrangement



## The Mock Interviews

- Pre-Mock Interview
  - Facilitated by instructor
  - Videotaped
  - Used employer prepared questions
  - Customized questions for job interest
- Post-Mock Interview
  - Facilitated by actual employer
  - Videotaped
  - Used employers originally prepared questions



## Employers Selected

### Entry Level

- Grocery Store
- Retail



### Professional Level

- Engineer-All subsets
- Computers-Variou functions



## The Silent Communicator

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Happy             | <input type="checkbox"/> Confused                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sincere           | <input type="checkbox"/> Serious                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sad               | <input type="checkbox"/> Goofy                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Surprised         | <input type="checkbox"/> Nervous                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Angry             | <input type="checkbox"/> Twirling hair                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friendly          | <input type="checkbox"/> Picking at clothes or with skin |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A firm handshake  | <input type="checkbox"/> Fidgeting with other items      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A tight handshake | <input type="checkbox"/> Alert and attentive             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A limp handshake  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aloof             |  |

## October Quiz

1. Facial expressions are a form of communication.
  - A. True
  - B. False
2. Reading the facial expressions of your interviewer can tell you:
  - A. If they are losing interest in what you are saying
  - B. If they are interested in what you are saying
  - C. If they are surprised
  - D. If they are distracted by something else
  - E. All of the above
3. Facial expressions can be used by the interviewee to emphasize a point.
  - A. True
  - B. False

## Role Play- Incorrect Way

*Myron Fishbine walks into the interview office. His shoulders are slumped, he looks around nervously. His eyes are darting around the room. He looks down at the floor, sees an empty chair by the desk, and sits down. He begins to tap his feet and unwraps a piece of gum. He puts it in his mouth. Myron looks at his watch, gets up from his chair, walks to the office door and looks out, then goes back to the chair and sits down.*

**Interviewer:** *(walks in and sees Myron tapping his foot)* "Yes, may I help you?"  
*(Myron is now jiggling his coins in his pocket)*

**Myron:** "Um, uh, I, uh think this is the right place. Could you wait a minute? I have to, uh, check something." *(He begins searching through his pockets trying to find the newspaper ad. As he's searching his pockets, he is getting agitated.)* "I know it's in here somewhere." *(He pulls out keys and gum and coins and is laying them on the interviewer's desk.)* "Finally! Excuse me." *(He reads from the crumpled newspaper ad.)* "Is this 800 Cranston?"

**Interviewer:** "Yes, it is."

**Myron:** "That's good. I'm not very good at following directions. Nobody is perfect right? Like my last boss, he was absolutely a Neanderthal. He was always hovering over me like he was King Kong and I was Mickey Mouse. Do you know he actually lied about me? I distinctly remember he gave me permission to take a break and accused me of loafing. Can you believe that?"

## Eight Tips for an Effective Greeting

1. Smile! Having a pleasant and polite demeanor will help to set the tone of the interview.
2. Wait for the interviewer to initiate shaking hands.
3. Do not sit until the interviewer sits or asks you to sit.
4. While shaking hands, an appropriate verbal greeting would be, "Hello Mr. Smith, nice to meet you." Be sure to only use last names. First names are too personal.
5. Eye contact helps the interviewer know you are interested and engaged. However, remember to look away occasionally so that your eye gaze does not become perceived as an intensive stare.
6. Do not go into an interview while chewing gum or anything else in your mouth.
7. When approaching the interviewer, keep an arm's length distance between both of you.
8. Make a nice compliment about the person's office, interesting pictures, or displayed hobbies.

## Role Play- Correct Way

*Myron walks in to the office. His posture is straight. He has a smile on his face. He is confident and poised.*

**Myron:** "Good morning. My name is Myron Fishbine. I'm very interested in the job that you are advertising for."

**Interviewer:** "Samantha Tolliver." *(extends hand to shake. Myron shakes her hand confidently.)* "Won't you sit down Mr. Fishbine?"

**Myron:** "Thank you, ma'am." *(sits)* "Ms. Tolliver, it said in the newspaper you are looking for someone dependable and responsible. I want you to know, ma'am, I'm that man."

**Interviewer:** "Well Mr. Fishburn, I like your spirit."

**Myron:** "Excuse me, ma'am. *(respectfully)* It's Fishbine. Many people mispronounce it. I'm kind of used to it."

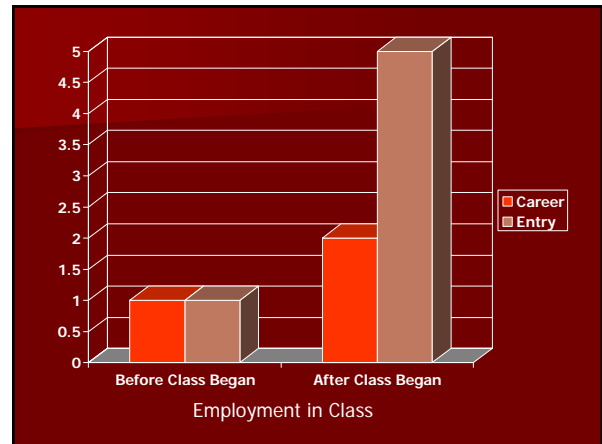
**Interviewer:** "I'm so sorry, Mr. Fishbine."

**Myron:** "Your receptionist was very kind to me when I walked in and I wasn't sure I had the right place."

**Interviewer:** "Well if I didn't work here, I'd probably get lost myself. It can be a bit confusing. Myron, can I offer you something to drink? It's a pretty hot day today."

**Myron:** "You're telling me! That's very kind of you, ma'am. I'd like that very much."

## Expression Example



## What Would We Do Differently

- Smaller class size
- A new class each quarter
- Have separate classes for those diagnosed with Asperger's Disorder and High Functioning Autism
- Have a separate class for high school age and young adult age individuals
- Have more employers represented for the pre and post mock interviews

## Video Clips

- Pre-Mock Interview
- Post-Mock Interview



## The Positives

- Improved interviewing skills
- Mentorship
- Positive feedback on surveys
- Friendships between class participants
- Helpfulness between class participants
- A willingness to participate
- Employment rate