AN INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH TO AUTISM AND THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC

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MARQUETTE AND AUTISM: WHERE HAVE WE BEEN, WHERE ARE WE GOING?

• Marquette Autism Initiative
  • https://www.marquette.edu/autism-initiative/
  • 10 faculty, 2 staff, 1 external collaborator, chaplain, 15 grad students, 11 undergrads
• 17-member Advisory Board
• Community Programs, Education, Research
  • COVID-19 and international studies
  • PEERS, MUSCLES camp, Swimming and exercise studies
  • Access for underserved populations
  • Technology for screening and support
On Your Marq college autism support program

Specialty clinics:
- Dentistry
- Speech Pathology
- Next Step Clinic
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LINK:
INCREASED RISK FOR GETTING COVID

- Physical distancing, wearing masks
- Day program
- Transportation
- Respite Providers
- Winter - indoors
CHALLENGES

• Change in routines
• Not being able to travel, or complete rituals
• Challenges adapting to others being sick, coughing
• Quarantine and isolation
• Limited day programs and residential options
STRATEGIES

- Anticipation / planning
- Managed care options and respite
- Advocate for day programs
- Work toward increasing options for residential care
- COVID-19 tool kit from the Autism Society of America: 
  - https://www.autism-society.org/covid-19/
- For Challenges during health care encounters-
  Use the -Autism Here we go! Health care app available at the Apple Store
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HTTPS://WWW.MARQUETTE.EDU/DISABILITY-SERVICES/ON-YOUR-MARQ/
The Basics

1. Stay Organized
2. Avoid Multitasking
3. Master the Class Modality
4. Have plan B-Z ready
5. Maximize your talents
The OnYourMarq Approach

1. Be in the Know
2. Support not Direct
3. Social Connections
4. A Place to be
5. Creative Problem Solving
6. Plan for the Future
INDEPENDENT STRATEGIES

1. Lean into Your Natural Abilities
2. Meet with Career Services
3. Look for micro-internship opportunities
4. Take advantage of all the programming
5. Take Time for Self-Care
Beyond MU
Lifelong Learning

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AUTISTIC ADULTS & COVID-19

• Negative effects on mental health
  • Depression
  • Anxiety
  • Loneliness
  • Stress
  • Increased ASD symptoms
• Positive effects on mental health?
  • "Too much" social interaction previously
  • Less overwhelming environment
ONLINE VS IN-PERSON INTERACTIONS

• In-person
  • Important for mental health
  • Increased loneliness during COVID-19

• Online
  • Increased social connections
  • Easier and more accessible
  • Lifeline during COVID-19
TAKEAWAYS

• Online communities can be a lifeline when isolated
  • Communities for hobbies, career, social groups
• Make time for both in-person and online interaction
  • Plan ways to keep in touch
  • Adjust mode depending on needs
• Providing online options can increase accessibility
THANK YOU!

• Questions?