As greater numbers of individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) are identified, more students with ASD are enrolling in post-secondary education settings. However, many college professionals have little experience assisting students with ASD. This poster presentation will display the specific concerns associated with college students with ASD and three specific practical intervention recommendations which can be adapted for the population and implemented on a college campus: freshmen introductory courses, social thinking groups, and peer mentoring.

**Academics**
- Difficulty understanding material
- Limited motivation for specific subjects
- Writing and written expression

**Mental Health**
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Obsessions and perseverations

**Socialization**
- Connecting to others
- Making friends
- Joining special interest groups and clubs

**Life Skills**
- Living with others; living alone
- Cleanliness; home living skills
- Personal hygiene

**Common Concerns**

**Freshmen/First-Year Introductory Seminars**
- Description: As many colleges and universities now have Introductory Seminars specifically designed for assisting with the transition of freshmen (or first-year) students to the post-secondary education environment, such courses can be adapted and modified to meet the specific needs of students with ASD. These courses should be smaller in size than other similar seminars and should require special permission for enrollment. Modifications to the usual course syllabus and structure should include increased step-by-step instruction of “presumed” college abilities, such as time management and organization skills, or physically navigating the campus. Discussion of the typical challenges faced by students with ASD as well as useful strategies and supports should be a consistent theme offset by similar focus on strengths and talents.
- Focus: Identification of campus resources, campus culture, study and learning strategies, differences between high school and college, stress management skills, organizational strategies, time management skills, and the environment, such courses can be adapted for the population and implemented.
- Frequency and duration: 90 minutes (up to 2 hours)

**Social Thinking Groups**
- Description: College students with ASD need an opportunity to learn concretely and directly about how to process social situations and act or respond in an appropriate manner. This is not to be considered a support group, although a separate and distinct support group is also beneficial for some students. Such groups are best led by an experienced educator or mental health professional and should include typical peers as models of appropriate social behavior. Inclusion of other interventions, such as students with social anxiety disorder, is discouraged. Consistency and strong structure is highly recommended.
- Possible sponsors: Psychological Services/Psychiatry, Counseling
- Methods: Didactic/discussion, model, role play, practice, feedback, repetition
- Frequency and duration: Weekly or twice monthly

**Peer Mentoring**
- Description: Peer mentoring for college students with ASD is a support in which trained peer volunteers meet regularly with students with ASD. Mentoring sessions involve progress monitoring in the areas of academics, mental health, socialization, and life skills. Mentors offer guidance on common strategies to facilitate positive outcomes in course work and academics, referrals for significant mental health challenges, suggestions for social interaction opportunities in areas of interest, and recommendations on addressing life skills goals for young adults. Supervision of mentors is strongly recommended, and supplemental small group didactic instruction for both mentors and mentees is encouraged. Mentees benefit by having a peer to model appropriate social interaction as well as provide motivation and monitoring for important goals for college students with ASD.
- Possible sponsors: Office of Disability Services
- Frequency and duration: Weekly (lower or depending on concern) 45 minute meetings

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