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## Competitive Employees with Autism Spectrum Disorder Achieving Long-Term Employment Success: A Retrospective Review of Employment Retention and Intervention

### A Quick Look

Policymakers, researchers, and state vocational rehabilitation administrators share an interest in the long-term outcomes of individuals participating in the public state vocational rehabilitation program. Yet, there is limited research in the area of job retention or the service delivery practices used to support individuals with disabilities to achieve long-term success in competitive integrated employment (CIE). This article begins to address this research gap by conducting a retrospective review of 139 records of individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) who were referred to an employment support organization for CIE over an eight-year period.

### Key Findings

Individuals with ASD have the ability to not only obtain, but, importantly, also maintain CIE.

With the long-term support feature of supported/customized employment individuals with ASD can be highly successful in today's workforce.

### Putting It Into Practice

Future research needs to occur in the area of job retention. A closer analysis needs to reveal the type of intervention that was provided at the job site and in the community. Answers to the following questions would provide increased guidance to field-based practitioners seeking to match intervention intensity to the needs of their clients with ASD: Who are the individuals who continue to require on-the-job support for over one year?

How long can job site intervention and support continue, or do these employees need a new job because the position was a poor match?

What were the types of supports that were provided to employees with ASD that allowed them to keep their jobs and advance in their careers?

Field-based practitioners and policy makers should take note of the importance of long-term supports and services for this group of employees with disabilities. Despite the excellent retention achieved by the clients whose records were reviewed, it is clear that they required varying levels of support-service intensity across the time period explored in this study.

## More About this Article (Where to go from here?)

This study described the supported/customized supports provided to individuals with ASD who achieved job retention for up to 18 months after stabilization. It appears that employees with ASD benefit from the continual assessment and intervention that occurs during the long-term supports phase of supported employment. Services that were offered during this phase included ongoing customization of the initial job, lateral job moves, and career advancement. The findings of this study provide further evidence of the impressive employment potential of individuals with ASD who receive specialized supports to address their social communication needs.

### **Citation:**

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