

# KTER Center: Improving Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling Services for People with Autism Spectrum Disorder

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# KTER Center Overview

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*KTER develops and tests knowledge translation (KT) strategies designed to help vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies and businesses find, understand and use research related to employing people with disabilities.*

# Moderator and Presenter

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## Moderator

- Ann Outlaw, M.A.
- Dissemination and TA Coordinator for the Center on Knowledge Translation for Employment Center



## Presenter

- Elizabeth Frentzel, M.P.H.
- Research Director for the Knowledge Translation for Employment Research Center



What was the purpose of the focus groups?

Who did you include in the focus groups?

# Focus Group Participants

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- **Who:**
  - VR counselors ( $n = 5$ )
  - Adults with ASD ( $n = 5$ )
- **What:**
  - VR counselors: What services, training, and resources VR counselors would find beneficial to enhance their services to adults with ASD.
  - Adults with ASD: Challenges people ASD have when finding and holding jobs, what services VR counselors can provide, and what training VR counselors and employers need.

What did you learn from the focus groups?

# Adults with Autism Focus Group Findings

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- **Desire to be treated as an individual**
  - “The sensory differences between autistic people is like asking somebody what their favorite color is. It’s going to be different for each person. And a different level of each sensory issue.”
- **Vocational aspiration extending beyond technologically-oriented occupations**
  - “They said because I was autistic, I had to work with numbers or computers. I wanted to work with people.”
- **Increasing understanding and awareness of their behaviors at workplace.**



# VR Counselors of Adults with Autism

## Focus Group Findings

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The VR counselors providing service to adults with ASD frequently reported

- needs for customizing strategies;
- importance of building rapport and trust with employers; and
- significance of understanding individuals' interests, strengths, and weaknesses, as well as their social context.

# Wrapping Up

*Thank you for participating!*

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- We invite you to:
  - Provide your input on today's webcast
  - Share your thoughts on future webcasts topics

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