

Building Job Interview Skills in Autistic Young Adults Through Web-Based Training

OVERVIEW

- Autistic young adults may face communication challenges and have limited opportunities to practice job interviews, which can make it harder to find employment.
- KF-Stride® is a web-based teaching program that helps autistic young adults identify and communicate their strengths to employers.
- Research shows KF-Stride can help improve interview skills, confidence, and employment-related outcomes.

• BACKGROUND •

Autistic people tend to face much higher unemployment rates than both the general population and people with other disabilities.^{1,2} These challenges are especially common for autistic people who are making the transition into adulthood. Common experiences include social difficulties, limited ability to communicate personal strengths, and reluctance to self-advocate.^{3,4,5} In the context of job interviews, these experiences may mean challenges with making eye contact, answering unpredictable questions, and expressing skills and capabilities. Limited access to opportunities for interview practice adds to these challenges.⁵ For autistic young adults, the challenge is not only the availability of the interview practice opportunities, but also the type of practice offered. Training has traditionally relied on in-person, role-playing sessions where a teacher, parent, or job coach assumes the role of interviewer.⁶ While in-person role-play can be beneficial, it is not always accessible and can be expensive to implement.⁷ Autistic young adults may also benefit from opportunities for repeated interview practice beyond what is typically offered by in-person role-playing settings. Repeated practice can help build confidence, strengthen skills, and reduce interview-related anxiety.⁴ Tailored web-based training programs can help meet these needs by strengthening communication skills through repeated opportunities to practice job interviews.

This info brief explores findings from Kessler Foundation's Center for Autism Research and their development of KF-Stride, a training program for autistic young adults on how to communicate personal strengths to employers during job interviews.

KF-Stride is a web-based, animated training program that helps autistic people learn and practice job interview skills.^{4,5} Through easy-to-follow written information, videos, and interactive activities, the program breaks down interview skills into smaller steps that are easier to understand and practice. Learners have repeated opportunities to build their skills and become more comfortable using them in an engaging, supportive online environment. KF-Stride is grounded in positive psychology, emphasizing the use of personal strengths to support real-world success.^{4,5} Helen Genova, PhD, associate director, Center for Autism Research, is using funding from the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) to adapt the KF-Stride intervention into a training program designed for autistic adults and individuals with neurodevelopmental conditions of all ages who are seeking employment or preparing to enter the workforce.

● KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS ●

A 2025 study comparing 20 autistic young adults who used KF-Stride to 20 autistic peers receiving usual transition services (i.e., existing supports already available through school or other programs) found that KF-Stride participants had greater improvements in interview skills, which were measured by blinded assessors rating videorecorded mock job interviews.⁵ Participants in the KF-Stride group also showed a greater increase in awareness of their personal strengths, which the team assessed using a self-report measure of how respondents felt they applied knowledge of their strengths during job interviews.⁵ The team also noted real-world indicators of the program's impact: among KF-Stride participants who were actively seeking employment, 54.5% secured jobs within six months, compared to just 12.5% of their peers receiving traditional transition services.⁵

Overall, the findings suggest that KF-Stride is an effective, strength-based program that enhances interview performance and improves future employment opportunities for autistic young adults.⁵

Another 2025 study paired the Virtual Interview Tool for Autistic Transition-Age Youth (VIT-TAY) with KF-Stride to examine whether this combined approach effectively improved interview skills.⁴

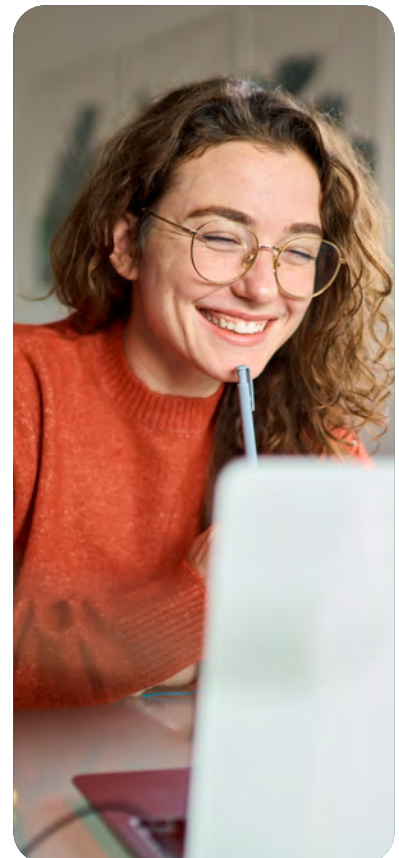
● IMPLICATIONS ●

KF-Stride has the potential to be an excellent resource for autistic young adults, school programs, transition programs, vocational rehabilitation counselors, job coaches, supported employment providers, and other workforce development professionals. Kessler Foundation offers two KF-Stride programs that support employment preparation: KF-Stride Into the Interview and KF-Stride Into Work. The first is a ten-lesson program designed to help youth prepare for job interviews by identifying and communicating their employable strengths. The second is an eight-lesson work-readiness program that teaches strength-based, positive coping skills to support emotional regulation in the workplace. Together, these programs provide a comprehensive approach to supporting future employment success for autistic young adults. See the following links for additional details:

- [KF-Stride Into the Interview](#)
- [KF-Stride Into Work](#)

VIT-TAY is an internet-delivered training program that allows autistic young adults to engage in repeated practice interviewing with a virtual hiring manager while receiving structured feedback. Ten autistic young adults participated in the study using this combined approach.⁴ Their outcomes were compared with another group of ten peers that received standard transition services instead.⁴ After completing the program, participants who used the combined approach reported greater confidence in their job interview abilities.⁴ The combined programs were also associated with gains in work readiness and job search behaviors.⁴ KF-Stride complemented VIT-TAY by encouraging autistic young adults to talk more openly about their strengths.⁴

Together, these studies show that KF-Stride, alone or combined with VIT-TAY, has the potential to improve job interview performance and self-presentation for autistic young adults, with promising evidence for improved future employment.





● RELATED RESOURCES ●

- [KF-Stride: Homepage](#)
- [KF-Stride: Our Research](#)
- [Center for Autism Research](#)
- [Helping Young Adults on the Autism Spectrum Build Brighter Futures](#)

● REFERENCES ●

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