## Autism Employment Training Program

Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) experience challenges in securing and sustaining competitive employment. Even with graduate-level skills, they often fail to get or keep employment, and the results is and 85% unemployment rate. Despite their capacity and willingness to work, adults with ASD face significant disadvantages in the labor market, including a lack of understanding and support in employment settings. The Autism Employment Training Program (AETP) will address critical gaps in knowledge for employers and increase competitive, integrated employment for adults with ASD by providing evidence-based approaches targeting both employers and individuals with ASD. Employment workshops for individuals with ASD (“Optimizing Yourself”) will use a peer-led model to uncover strengths, identify employment support needs of individuals with ASD, and facilitate sharing of success strategies among peers. Six two-hour workshop sessions will be supplemented by work-based internships for up to 3 months. The employer component (“Autism Works”) will provide training and professional development activities for companies.

All workshops and employer trainings in this program are presented collaboratively by a pair of experienced trainers, and adult with ASD and a neurotypical adult. The inclusion of the insider’s perspective of individuals with ASD who have successfully bridged the employment divide in the design of this program provides unique strategy and support for employers, interns, and employees on the autism spectrum. The outcomes will be: 1) paraprofessional learning that increases how many people with ASD get jobs or keep jobs; 2) and how many job opportunities for individuals with ASD are created.

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**Training Category:** Employment

**Training Audience:** Paraprofessionals, Individuals with Disabilities

**Estimated # to be trained:** 45

## Social-Emotional Learning & Askable Adult Toolkit for Parents and School Paraprofessionals

Supportive adults can have a profound impact on a young person and their behavior. However, not all youth have this support. This lack of support increases the youth’s engagement in risky behavior at higher rates than those youths that have supportive adults. Youth with disabilities are considered a vulnerable population. They need support at a much higher level in order for them to thrive as healthy adolescents. A connection with a supportive adult in this population is very important.

The Utah Department of Health is applying for $300,000 in a three-year period through the Interagency Outreach Training Initiative (IOTI) project. The goal of this project is to increase the ability of parents and paraprofessionals to effectively support youth with disabilities by providing professional development and parent education training. This three-tiered training will introduce school paraprofessionals and parents to skills that build social-emotional learning skills, increase positive adult-teen communication, and strengthen relationships with young people, ages 10-19 that currently have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Based on demographic information such as state location (urban, rural, frontier), income levels, educational attainment, and population groups, the UDOH selected five high-need regions to participate in the project- Salt Lake, Uintah Basin, San Juan, Ogden, and Southeast.

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**Training Category:** Direct Service Workforce Development

**Training Audience:** Paraprofessionals, Families/Care Providers

**Estimated # to be trained:** 2,600

## Dual Diagnosis Training and Outreach

Statement of Need: A significant percentage of individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities are also living with a mental health diagnosis. Identifying the signs, symptoms and appropriate treatment options for this population requires specialized training and support for both professionals and caregivers. As noted in a white paper developed for Utah policy makers, a lack of training for mental health providers about best practices for treating individuals with dual diagnosis decreases the quality of the services available. Many practitioners feel unprepared to serve this complex population. Individuals, families, and care providers in Utah struggle to access mental health services. A need for increased training and support exists across Utah communities.

Project Goal: Utilizing both existing relationships and new interagency collaborators, TKJ will plan, advertise, complete, and evaluate trainings for paraprofessionals, professionals, individuals, and family members of individuals with a dual diagnosis.

Objectives: Using a comprehensive curriculum from the nationally recognized NADD, TKJ will: a) identify areas where training for care providers is limited; b) maintain and expand a database of evidenced-based materials; c) prepare and conduct on-site trainings at provider locations across the state; d) implement evaluation tools; and e) ensure sustainability of training materials during and beyond the grant funding period.

Participants: This project will target paraprofessionals, family members, and professionals supporting people with dual diagnosis. Training will be completed across the state of Utah, including underserved rural areas. And will be offered by master’s level trainers.

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**Training Category:** Mental Health

**Training Audience:** Paraprofessionals, Families/Care Providers, Volunteers

**Estimated # to be trained:** 1500