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Karen Chung:

[00:00:00](#)

-Welcome everybody. Thank you so much for being here. I'm so excited that you're able to join us today. So this is really exciting for us. This webinar that we're doing today, planning for transition is part of a series that we're doing a transition in practice. So last year we did ethics in practice webinars series with Dr. Bailey. This year we're so excited to be doing this with Dr. Peter Gerhardt. And what's also very exciting is we're also doing topics similar to that of SexEd and practice webinars as well. So you will be getting some more information about that in the upcoming weeks or so. So a little bit of background, Peter and I meet at about four or five years ago and this is long term and a lot of timing and transition as you know, obviously is a very, very important area and it's an area that gets very little coverage I think, and visibility in the marketplace, especially with at the behavior analyst community.

Karen Chung:

[00:01:00](#)

And we're so excited to be able to move forward. And Peter, I'm sure that you've thought a lot of great things you know, since we met four years ago and I know that you've developed quite the reputation and right so in the area of sexEd as well, we're really excited to be able to explore that. Amanda can move forward, they'd be great housekeeping poster questions, usually have a, a tech or a question by some place. If your question is selected, we may be asking you to unmute yourself. If you'd like to talk to us, don't ask that question, that would be great, but don't feel like that's an obligation. You will just be able to read off of that as well. The technical difficulties, I'm sorry. If you do then chat Leslie and hopefully she can walk you through that. There'll be about a five minute break between a half by the webinar and , a recorded version of this webinar will be available next week.

Karen Chung:

[00:01:55](#)

You'll get an email. And also last point because we're this live scenarios and we're taking questions, it's really, you know, sometimes we go late, which is perfectly fine and I think it's actually great because you get more content, but just want to give you a heads up. If you need to leave after two hours, that's perfectly fine. You're going to get the recorded webinar and so you won't be missing out on a content. And I think you is, sometimes you're able to get three C's as opposed to two C's. So it's not such a bad thing.



- Karen Chung: [00:02:26](#) All right. Thank you. So objectives for you quickly. We're going to review the transition model framework. It's really, really important. What we want to do is we want to set the stage of , transition series and it will be really emphasizing the importance of thinking of the transition and incorporating different aspects of transition during early intervention. Not just thinking about that when you're getting high school stage and going, Oh my gosh, he can, Oh, forgot to think about, you know, we completely forgot to plan for that. So Peter, we'll talk a lot about that. But that's if there's nothing that you take away, that is the one thing that we would like you to take away is there are things that you could be doing and you should be doing early on. Make sure that the clients that you work with against whomever have the best chance in life to be able to achieve the level of independence that they can achieve.
- Karen Chung: [00:03:20](#) We'll be also talking about the main considerations to adjust. This is focusing on, we're saying it's middle school to high school, but really it's [inaudible] than that you'll be, we'll be talking about, like I said, early intervention and then also the needs of adults as well because the idea really is, you know, you want to develop a roadmap and the roadmap should be not focus on what you want to accomplish that you want to achieve and then you can work backwards and obviously the more aggressive accomplishments or the level of the [inaudible] are shooting for the more work and a lot of cases that needs to happen, but that's when the early starting early and know becomes really, really important. Okay. Talking a little bit again about the changing focus from academic skills to independent living, you know, adaptive skills that need to happen, but there is an appropriate time to start planning for this in a formal way.
- Karen Chung: [00:04:15](#) We're addressing that as well. Definitely. You know, obviously sort of incorporating daily living skills is very early. I think it's kinda self-explanatory and the key elements transition IEP and so a transition plan, everybody knows about the trends. That's the plan. It's part of the IEP process. But what does a transition plan look like? You know, not just some kind of goals that arbitrary goals. You stick on an IEP because you really deliberate and thinking through and really treating that, the transition plan as a roadmap to get to where it is that you want to get to. Okay.  
Amanda



- Amanda Fishley: [00:05:00](#) Ummm.
- Karen Chung: [00:05:02](#) Oh, see process two options. You know, one, the recorded version is available. You'll get it get notification. You can go into our system and the quiz will be there if you need the CEUs or would like to get your CEUs and they just send us an email and we'll send you the CEU quiz manually and you'll be able to submit it that way.
- Amanda Fishley: [00:05:22](#) Uhhh.
- Karen Chung: [00:05:22](#) there's a little bit of lag. Sorry. Okay. Dr Peter Gerhardt. You all know dr Peter Gerhardt is, I would imagine, you know, he is basically the rock star and transition and sexEd and we're really excited and we're so very lucky to be able to mute. Dr. Gerhardt Peter, work with us but not just in a superficial way like I said, but really a deep exploration of this topic. And so that the objective really is you get the information that you need, but for us the goal is create the level of independence for you so that you can start thinking independently and looking at things from Peter's perspective and you know, the context and the ability to think and be able to make decisions and so very critical. And rather than me reading the bio cause you guys can all read. What I'd like to do is to have Peter talk a little bit about background and how he got to work he is today.
- Peter Gerhardt: [00:06:20](#) Thank you first I wanna I really want to thank both Karen and Amanda and special learning inc for putting up with me in this process and allowing me to do this. I have my own executive functioning deficits that they accommodated and work with. I really appreciate it. Plus, everybody [inaudible] this sort of made me think again about it sometimes you get into, a groove that maybe a good groove but isn't necessarily always the right thing. So it was just, I just wanted to thank you both for doing it. you know, kind of said, you know, I'm a rock star or whatever. In many ways I've, I'm lucky enough that I was a big fish in a little pond. because I started with adolescents and adults back in 1980 nobody else was doing it Like it wasn't really all that interesting.
- Peter Gerhardt: [00:07:17](#) And then in 87 with Lovas article on early intensive behavioral intervention, you know, everybody, they flocked in our field to working with little kids. So again, that sort of left me out in the



field and I, you know, I often talk about that, you know, if I worked in early intervention and I was as knowledgeable as I am in my field is I would be an early intervention. I would be one of a lot of people doing it. but because I've worked in this sort of different area, I get this sort of claim a certain status because I have very little competition. She is not, you know, a huge Mark of success, but I will accept it. You know, I, I am the classic, result of the consequences of my life. I never planned to do any of this I started back in 1980 undergraduate at Rutgers university psychology major junior year.

Peter Gerhardt: [00:08:23](#)

I signed up for a fieldwork course to work with typical kids. It was supposed to be a very easy course and everybody else signed up for it. So I got closed out of it and assigned to work with kids with autism at the Douglas developmental disabilities center. thankfully in Sydney Harris, one of my personal and professional heroes assigned me to the adolescent classroom. This is 1980 like autism. Like people didn't know much about it. Like my first textbook in applied behavior analysis was actually Belkin Herson's behavior modification, you know, so we weren't even using the term applied behavior analysis yet. So you know, this goes back away an, honestly back in 1980 anything we did with adolescence, people reinforced us for, Oh we're taking the kids out to lunch today. Oh good for you. That's really great. That's great. That's really impressive. Oh we're teaching them to make it look.

Peter Gerhardt: [00:09:21](#)

Oh good for you. That's really great. That's like, Oh we're going shopping today. Good for you. Like the problem is I go there a lot of transition programs today and I see them doing the same. Then we did back in 1980. Field of transitioning and transition to adulthood Hasn't changed all that much in 37 years. Cause, unfortunately now there have been changes. Yes. I'm not saying that nothing has changed. but compared to the field of early intervention, the float of educational inclusion in the field of assessment, intervention and problematic behavior, we've sort of lagged behind, which is really a shame because all of you here listening today and watching today, and I told my staff this all the time, you are the last, you are your students last best chance for a real life you are the last person to be able to give them this pills while you still have an educational entitlements so that they can have a life of what we call competence, dignity, and quality. That's a big goal. And I think that's an



overwhelming amount of pressure, honestly. But that's also why every day I think there's a new challenge for me and every day hasn't been experienced because there's always the next thing to look at. That's sort of who I am. That's all I got to here today. So why don't we then keep going?

Amanda Fishley:

[00:10:53](#)

All right. Well that's the tough to follow, but I'll introduce myself.

Karen Chung:

[00:11:03](#)

I up before you go there, I just, I fell, I just found this really fascinating about Peter Dr. Gerhardt sorry, which is that he's not a here you are not obese. So I was quite shocked about that. What surprises me about that is, you know, we're able to offer CE credits in order for you to be able to offer CE credits through the BACB. You have to be a certified, I think Peter is the only person that I know all who's actually able to offer CE credits. So you can see the importance of the work that you do and the recognition that he's getting even from the BACB even though he's not part of the club. But of course you are. And there was a little bit what it is, what you do that you vague.

Peter Gerhardt:

[00:11:47](#)

Yeah. Well I have to, I will. When initially when the BCPA came out, I became sort of a conscientious objector. Not for any other reason than I was. I saw it as another thing for little kids. Like it really was sort of an, it's usually in response to early intervention and people hanging up shingles. And doing bad work under the guise of applied behavior analysis. An so I, I, you know, inappropriately it was like, Oh, this is the reason for me. And like, and then it just kept going. But I have been lucky enough to get that status where I can do this. and I am a big supporter of, to be able to also certification board and getting your BCBA cause I think it's an essential today. I don't think you can practice in this field or should practice in this field without it.

Karen Chung:

[00:12:37](#)

And Amanda is, she's a rock star issues developing quite the reputation herself. She's a associate director of clinical solutions for special learning and she's really the backbone of, putting all of this together. And, she's done some pretty amazing work and we're very lucky to have her. But Amanda again can tell us a little bit about yourself.



Amanda Fishley:

[00:12:57](#)

Yeah. Well thank you. so my name is Amanda Fishley . I am a BCBA, but I'm also a certified Ohio behavior analyst and Columbus, Ohio. I've had the opportunity to work with young kids, but a lot of my background actually is with young adolescents and young adults. And it was something I never knew I was interested in until I was kind of thrown in with that group. And I love it. And when I was coming on board with special learning and going through the process, they said, you know, who, who would you like to work with? And dr Gerhardt was definitely, or Peter with someone I said, cause I, I've always looked up to what he's been doing and got to hear his talks and it's very inspirational. So I'm happy that it's coming together and we're, we have him here today. So yeah, so a little bit about my background, I have some experience with younger kids as well as some adolescents working in schools, but I have a lot of experience working in mental health facilities as well. and, and the supervision aspects of supervising, board certified behavior analysts, candidates that are looking to get their certification is where a lot of my background is.

Karen Chung:

[00:14:04](#)

Okay. So we're very, very lucky to have the panelists join us today. And the role of the channel is pretty critical because what we wanted to is a Special Learning and Dr. Gerhardt Peter. We want you guys to learn from that are out in the field doing the work and to, you know, there is really great, but it's third application that's really important. And with the analysts that we have joining us today, you get a lot of different perspectives from a practitioner perspective that I think is so incredibly important. And we have Jacqueline Moreno a M.A., BCBA Katie Hine BCBA as well. Lisa Berkowitz, a BCBA and Erica, Erica. I think you're a D level right? And I'd like you to your B level as well. So sorry. And what I'd like the panelists to do is to talk to us a little bit about their background because I think it's really important for us to know what their perspective and where they're coming from and how you approach it. So, Jacqueline. Okay.

Jacqueline More...:

[00:15:08](#)

Hi. Thank you for having me on here. I take a lot of my experience from growing up with my sister. She is 23 now, which always makes me a shock. she was diagnosed at two years old with autism and over the course of the years it's changed to severe autism and that, the, your intellectual disability about three to four years ago, she was diagnosed with



bipolar disorder. So there is morbid issues that, now my family is dealing with. And through all of that, as we kind of grew up in behavior and having therapists come in and out of our, kind of her experience and seeing what worked and what group work.

Jacqueline More...: [00:15:59](#)

And I really found my niche in that siblings dynamic family systems theory, really looking at how the entire family as environments that are being affected person for success or perhaps for success. So that's really where my background and my interest in my niches.

Karen Chung: [00:16:22](#)

Thank you When Jacqueline first wrote us about her background, I thought it was so good to be perspective. So very interesting because she has firsthand perspective, you know, dealing with a sibling with a disability. And so I'd love to hear more about that because it's a very different perspective. Okay. Moving out to Katie, a little bit about yourself.

Katie Hine: [00:16:46](#)

Well, at my age you can't help but have a lot of experience. So, I grew up at the university of Kansas when it was the human development and family life program. I took courses from Don Baer and Manuel and I worked on research projects under Todd Risley. So I'm, A fundamentalist, a fundamentalist behavior analyst. I have done, extensive clinical work with adolescents, children and adults. And typically when, regardless of of my role when I am called in, it is because things have gone badly. I'm very rarely in a position to intervene beforehand or, or help with a plan. So I have a lot of experience and, and why you should do transition planning. And, I actually, one of my favorite talks is by doctor Gerhardt through the behavior analysis online program at university of North Texas. And I have watched that video over and over again because it is so packed with information. So I was very eager to be involved with this webinar.

Karen Chung: [00:18:26](#)

Okay. Katie. Lisa is having some technical difficulties, so we're going to have Erica, I'll talk a little bit about yourself.

Erica Holding: [00:18:37](#)

Hi I guess for me, my experience started about 25, 26 years ago. I'm also at Rutgers university at Douglas and I started basically because I was, working in Manhattan and PR and a totally mindless job and I wanted to go back to grad school and I knew I needed to get at least a master's in psychology to find work.





But my parents very kindly told me that they were done paying for my education. My good friend, said to me, well, why don't you come work at the school where I teach called Douglas here at Rutgers and you'll get free tuition free tuition. What's, what's, what's autism and no idea, you know, so, you know, sometimes they say that like, you know, life chooses you, you know, like you like your direction. So, yeah, I started 25 years ago. I started working in the preschool there.

Erica Holding:

[00:19:36](#)

I've gone on to do many things throughout my career. I'm a school psychologist. I have done independent evaluations. I've been a principal of a school for kids with autism. I worked, it actually wasn't until I worked with adults with autism and a program preparing, young adults for college that I actually became more interested in transition to adulthood because I saw all of the skills that young people were struggling with, as they transition to into adulthood. And I saw kind of almost like the outcome, Oh, not having great intervention when they were young. I could see the , manifestation of skill deficits and skill difficulties as they look at it in adulthood as opposed to when they were children. So I became very, very interested and how to better prepare, these young people for adulthood and help them to have like the most successful, independent and happy life. And that's really where my interests lie and my passion lies. Talking about transition into adulthood, especially through middle of high school. I think it was a very difficult time period.

Karen Chung:

[00:20:55](#)

All right. Thank you so much, Lisa. We'll have her join us when she's able to stabilize her internet connection. This is live. Hey there's, you know, the beauty and benefit of doing this live. I don't think that I've introduced myself, sorry if I didn't. My name is Karen Chung. I'm the founder and CEO of special learning and, you know, I'm the least important person in this whole today's conversation but led that I was an architect and be able to bring all of us together. Especially it's just this is such important. It's such an important topic I think for me in particular because obviously we all realize it's grow up and then they become adolescents and then they become adults. But in terms of thinking about that, majority of us, you know, the people that are in the field are really thinking only early intervention.



- Karen Chung: [00:21:45](#) And as I was listening to the powerless top, so I liked it, and so gratified that you guys are actually looking at this from a perspective of planning really early. Let's not wait. Let's be really proactive. Let's be deliberate about the things that we need to do so that we can help people achieve the life life of independence. I'll say independence in terms of the greatest level of independence that you can achieve. And Peter would like to say a happy life, and I think, you know, Hey Eric, I think I hear this a happy life. That's really important. Everybody should be able to attain, be happy in life. All right, Amanda, moving on.
- Karen Chung: [00:22:24](#) Yeah, so the transition framework model, this is really fraught, but this actually is something that I was thinking about a long time ago because I probably not you guys, but our lay person, we think about an individual with autism and I think, well, that person's never going to go to college and that person's never going to have a job.
- Karen Chung: [00:22:44](#) And as you guys know, that's absolutely not true. But in order for us to make sure that somebody has an opportunity to go to college, they can get a job, not just a job, that they can get a job that's substantial and that's very meaningful and making a huge impact in society and they habilitation. That's kind of like the least preferred path up plate. But if you're not thinking about what skills are necessary for somebody to be able to go to college, you know, what are some of the skills necessary for people to have love, for them to actually get a job and be independent, be happy and be fulfilled in what it is that you're doing, then we're not going to be able to keep that objective. Or if you do, it's going to be by happenstance. And when you're dealing with people's lives, it shouldn't be happenstance. It should be deliberate, it should be banned. And so that's what the transition or the framework model is really all about putting it out there and saying, okay, here's a picture and there's different paths that are available and let's be very, you know, let's be very deliberate about where we want to take this. You know, your student or your patient or your sister or you know [inaudible] it doesn't really matter. And so this is what we're exploring really. How do we get there?
- Karen Chung: [00:24:01](#) Okay. And I'm going to turn the rest of the presentation over to you guys, the subject matter experts. So Amanda, if you can lead us off, it would be great.



- Amanda Fishley: [00:24:09](#) Great. All right. So this probably doesn't surprise you, but you know, we go through life and there's a ton of different transitions. So these include things like chronological transitions as you can see, skill transition. So learning new skills, you know, inevitably lead to transitions. But there's also some transitions that we don't talk about as much. And these are things that occur within society. So the nerves in society and these, we were having a conversation, Peter and I, and these are absolutely applicable and these are important for people to think about and to plan for. So things like sitting on someone's lap, you know, what, what age does that become inappropriate? But that's a transition that the students that we're working with have to make. And it's awkward sometimes, but those types of transitions need to be directly taught. So at some point it becomes inappropriate to follow the adult into the restroom and into the stall. But when you're a small child, it's okay, that's what kids do. But those are subtle transitions that we're not always thinking about. And as the educators of these students, those are the things we need to think about. We need to plan for. So hugs and kisses, those are certainly in examples, but there's also things within cultures and international traditions too that we have listed here that, our transitions for our youth that we need to be considering.
- Amanda Fishley: [00:25:39](#) All right, so this is, this is Peter's central slide. He feels this is the most important. So I'll turn it to Peter.
- Peter Gerhardt: [00:25:50](#) Yeah. you know, I am, you know, you know, Katie said she's a fundamentalist, you know, behavior analyst and, and I have to agree with her and I'm, I'm just, I'm also a big world behavior analyst. Like I think our field has far more to offer than just what is in the autism literature. And I think oftentimes we have sort of stuck in that little box and don't look beyond it. But I also never, I'm in trouble when I can't figure something out. I returned to the seven dimensions. That's sort of where I go back and I look like, am I doing this? Am I doing that? And when you talk about transition and, leading adult lives, like I think, you know, the whole idea of this producing strong socially important effects that generalized new environments continue up, the formal treatment is ended really are the two most important.
- Peter Gerhardt: [00:26:48](#) Now, I, I often will talk about, you know, independent of how evidence-based your intervention is teaching the wrong skill



well is no better than teaching the right skill poorly. And I go to a lot of places and I see incredibly competent like behavior analysts teaching skills, you know, in a very clinically brilliant way. But the skill is nonsense so it really means very little. And I think our field sometimes falls victim of being enamored by the behavior analysis part as opposed to the applied part. And I think it's really all three that are part of this. And, you know, we will talk about whether there's this sort of dearth of research in adolescents and adults and transition point of that really is because when you're done doing that, you just can't control all the variables that are required to get published in high prestige journals.

Peter Gerhardt:

[00:27:49](#)

So there's a lot of good stuff that goes on out in the real world. Yes. Doesn't get documented the way we would like it or we might hope it could get documented. so I think we always have to be thinking about is the teacher teaching the right thing to teach. I get so tired of meeting adolescents and young adults and I have to say, how come nobody taught you this? How'd you get to be 21? And it still can't go to the bathroom independently? How'd you get to be 21? and not be able to safely cross the street? Like how'd you get a high school diploma and you know, not know how to work as part of the team. You know, all of these things that really make the difference in life, which are these, the strong social important effects. So for me, this is where I always come back.

Peter Gerhardt:

[00:28:38](#)

I also want to say that the Ethics school where I work this year in particular, we're putting a large emphasis on the fact that we should be successful in our classrooms. Like we shouldn't, like we're really smart behavior analysts. We have a whole field of research. Like we're good, we have resources, you know, but we also control all the variables in a classroom. It's like, well, you can control everything. The real test of what we do is how well it generalizes outside. So we're now looking at whether or not goals are mastered, not just by can they do it in a classroom, can they do it contingent upon the SD? But do they do it independently outside, which really has to be the ultimate test of what we're doing. That was a really long explanation on that slide.

Lisa Berkowitz:

[00:29:27](#)

I just jumped in. I'd like to say that I'm, that's one of the biggest problems that I see with my teachers, that they'll say, well, they



do it for me and I'm always trying to impress upon them the importance that just doing it for you is not enough. They have to be able to do it at home for mom, for grandma, for the babysitters. Because you may have wonderful behavioral control, but that doesn't mean a child has truly mastered a skill. So important. And if they can't use it outside the walls of your classroom, they haven't learned a thing that's useful or valuable.

Karen Chung: [00:29:57](#)

Lisa? Yes. Right. Okay. We didn't get a chance to talk a little bit about your background, so if you don't mind telling us a little bit, a little bit about the, it would be great.

Lisa Berkowitz: [00:30:09](#)

Sure. So I do apologize for all my technical, technological glitches, however I am here. So I have a 10 years experience in early intervention I also happen to fall into this field, not plants. I had gone to NYU, I was a recreation and leisure studies, undergraduate major. And I had wanted to go into sports medicine, physical therapy, and I wound up having to quickly change my field of specialization due to course, um, availability. And I did recreational therapy and I wound up being assigned to working with children in NYU hospital, the Rusk Institute with disabilities. And I fell in love with it. And the first job I could find out of the field was working with children with autism. And I wound up getting my masters in teaching. I'm old school and teacher, the handicap, they don't even offer that anymore. So I kind of shows my age.

Lisa Berkowitz: [00:31:02](#)

And after being in the field of early intervention, I realized I wanted to further myself professionally. I'd have to bite the bullet and go get my BCB. So I did that as a single mom and I run an autism program in a public school district right now as a contractor. Yeah. And do we have a preschool all the way up to high school. And when I went in there, we only had elementary and preschool. And we've grown the program and made a lot of lot of changes. I'm very happy to be here. Finally. It was a lot of work getting plugged in, but I'm here and I love the field. I love working with the students. I love working with the parents, the families. I just find this field extremely rewarding. But, I do also find that there's sometimes a lot of wasteful time. I'm not being utilized to really teach the right things. And as part of professional development, workshops that I hold, I find it so



important just to make sure that we're spending time teaching meaningful skills for our learners.

Karen Chung: [00:32:09](#)

Thank you.

Peter Gerhardt: [00:32:10](#)

And I, when we talk about transitioning, I think there was a couple of salient points that are very simple. What is always transitioned to what, like there's only, it has to be the sorta end goal that you're transitioning to. Otherwise, you know, it just becomes a very nice looking process, but there has to be a really important goal with that, and it's, it's also the acuity to Lewis Carroll and Alison Wonderland, but it's sort of a paraphrasing of it, but it's, if you don't know where you're going, any road will get you there, you know? So if you don't have a clear goal, it's really easy just to teach a lot of stuff that you think is important but may not be important, you know? So if we're thinking about work, what are those skills that a person is going to need to be gainfully employed either competitively or in support environments?

Peter Gerhardt: [00:33:07](#)

Postsecondary education, we know that the research supports that, many individuals with an autism spectrum disorder label who go to college don't succeed in college, but not because of academic reasons, because of social and adaptive behavior reasons or executive functioning reasons that nobody bothered to teach them those skills. oftentimes these kids get almost over accommodated in the classroom so they don't know what to do once they're out. and it really needs to focus on, I said that life that you would want, not this modified life, not this sort of separate life. And that, you know, involves a being in the community of your choice and being with the people that you want to be with and you know, having leisure activities that are beneficial to you and are fun. going forward. I think one of the big elephants in the living room, just so you know, is accessing adequate health care as part of a transition plan.

Peter Gerhardt: [00:34:10](#)

so we're looking now at healthcare transitions, because many adults so on the spectrum still are seen by their pediatrician as their primary care physician, which is not really good for either of them. And there's a fair amount of research now getting that most adults with more classic autism, low verbal adults get much of their primary health care through emergency rooms, which is not good use of emergency room resources nor the



good primary healthcare. So there are some really big issues there, but I do want to sort of come back to, you know what Erica has said and Karen said this idea of happiness and it sounds kind of fluffy and it sounds kind of non behavior analytic. It's like, it's like happiness, touchy feely, you know. first of all, ask any kind of any kid, what do you want for your son or daughter when they grow up and they say, I want it to be happy. Like that's sort of a quintessential like answer. Danny Reed has published I think four or five articles in Java with happiness as an outcome variable. So this is not something, beyond our capacity. And I often ask, I was just out in Arizona and I asked everybody there, when's the last time you had an IEP goal of happiness as an outcome variable? And nobody had, I've, I've only, in all my talks I had one say they did.

Peter Gerhardt: [00:35:39](#) Now. I know that sounds, again, like I said, sort of touchy feely, but I do think that's a consideration if we're talking about an actual life. So next.

Katie Hine: [00:35:49](#) Yeah. And we're also, if I can add, especially when we're transitioning from, being a student into being an adult, we should also be asking whether or not the family is happy, whether the parents are happy. oftentimes they don't really think of themselves because they're too busy thinking of their children and as their child becomes an adult and they look out, that's a, that's a real emptiness syndrome. now your life has just moved out and is starting to become an adult and have a life of their own and there you are left. And I find that to be a very important aspect of the transition process is not just the individual with the disability, but the parents who have spent their lives focused on this child.

Amanda Fishley: [00:36:56](#) Right. Yeah. I couldn't agree more. Absolutely. I encourage you to read the research that Peter was talking about from Dennis Reed about measuring happiness and how you, how you can do that cause he explains, you can measure indices of happiness and unhappiness, which is equally as important. So

Amanda Fishley: [00:37:15](#) Do a little research on it. There are good reading.

Erica Holding: [00:37:19](#) Yeah, for me too. I think, one of the things when we were talking about earlier, I think it's one of those things that's happened in our field as well, is that, that mentorship that we



have when we're becoming a BCA or becoming, you know, getting our masters. Last few years I didn't, when I supervise, people to get their BCBA and I'm going through the programming with them, I always remember something that drGerhardt said when I saw him speak 15 years ago, it was like, if you can't see what the scale is going to look like in 10 years, you know, how's it going to be useful? You know, if you can't see where this skill is going or where it's gonna lead that child to and why are you working on it. And so a lot of times today, maybe because also the influences of how busy everyone is because of the insurance. Nowadays, people just are churning out reports and stuff with goals on the I'm always encouraging, people that I've supervised to think about why they're picking those goals, I'll actually go through them. Okay. Like you wanted to work on idioms. Why? And if they can't tell me why. And I'm like, is that really what we need to be working on right now? And a lot of times people don't ask themselves that question. I just go down the

Erica Holding: [00:38:36](#) checklist, go, Oh this is the next thing on the Vineland Idioms. I should be working on idioms. So they're not thinking about the child's life and where we're trying to get it from too.

Amanda Fishley: [00:38:44](#) I was just going to, so we, you know, we listed the goals that people have, whether it's for the young child or older child, but these are, these are the realities. And I think maybe they're surprising to some, but maybe, maybe not. And the fact of the matter is that many of our adults are unemployed or they're underemployed or if they are lucky enough to be employed, they're not paid as much as their counterparts doing the same job, which is concerning as well. And just the, just the barriers that they face when being integrated into the community, which, you know, our panelists and I'm sure a lot of you that are working in the field may experience every day, but these include things such as challenging behaviors that, you know, when you're working with someone on community based instruction that has significant aggression, it's challenging and it's different when you're working with a three year old that is hitting you versus an 18 year old that can really, you know, hurt somebody.

Amanda Fishley: [00:39:42](#) So that's certainly a barrier. Not to mention things like poor hygiene, some inappropriate sexual behaviors that are often exhibited by some of our adolescents that we're working with in





this transition phase. and knowing that they have fewer friendships and relationships and tend to engage in activities in isolation are certainly some barriers that they face.

Katie Hine: [00:40:05](#)

No, I think a lot of the.

Peter Gerhardt: [00:40:06](#)

Yeah you know i would.

New Speaker: [00:40:06](#)

Go ahead.

Peter Gerhardt: [00:40:06](#)

No go ahead. Go ahead.

Katie Hine: [00:40:12](#)

When I work with these young people, it's that they are not motivated by what we, we are motivated by. They're not looking to get a better job at higher pay. They're not, they don't and they don't care whether or they don't notice that other people find some of their physical condition to be unappealing. And so connecting them with the contingencies that produce a better employment and better wages is very difficult.

Amanda Fishley: [00:41:02](#)

one of the things that I was thinking when you're sure. Okay. One of the things that I, it's definitely a problem is hand addressing the behaviors. So in the elementary level, a lot of the teachers feel very pressured that they need to be introducing academics and therefore they are filling the kids up with academics and not between behaviors and not always addressing the behaviors. And I found it really helpful to down with administration and explain to them that with our population addressing socially appropriate behavior and now adaptive behavior is the most important part of educating them. Because if you fill them up with all this knowledge but they don't know how to act appropriately in a social situation or they can't control their behavior, then we're really not helping them. And I've found it to be important to speak to your administrators so that the teachers feel more comfortable with their roles that they need to, really focus on behavioral control and establishing good social repertoires and not just following core curriculum standards that they often feel pressured to do because it's so important that they not just have that knowledge base but they actually have a appropriate social behaviors.



- Amanda Fishley: [00:42:21](#) So I found that helpful to call administration and, and have them on board.
- Karen Chung: [00:42:26](#) Amanda Can you go back one place?
- Peter Gerhardt: [00:42:27](#) Yeah. And I just want to, yeah, I just want to make two quick points, you know, following up with what Katie was saying that I, you know, 10 years ago, 15 years ago, so I did a presentation at a conference, that I titled a person centered approach to developing social competencies in adolescents and adults with autism spectrum disorders. And then I met with Gina Green was at this conference and at the time, person centered was not really an ABA sort of term. And I figured I'd better go back down Gina beforehand and explained what I was talking about that she knew and what I was talking about really was a functional analytic perspective of social. Why would he want to be social in the first place? Like what are the contingencies that would support that as opposed to me just teaching arbitrary skills that I think are important.
- Peter Gerhardt: [00:43:21](#) so I think it is so critical that we look from the perspective of our students and our clients to figure out how it's gonna work for them and why it would work for them and not just make an arbitrary declaration that this is the one skill. also to follow up on something Amanda said, you know, the, there is always a challenge when you have significant challenging behavior that can occur in the community but I will play out that as a behavior analyst, I don't have the tools to teach you not to be aggressive in the community unless I go in the community. Like, I can't just do it in a classroom and then expect it to generate like I have to go out, I have to, but when I do what I do it smart. You know, I look at all my data and my data and I say, you know what?
- Peter Gerhardt: [00:44:10](#) Monday mornings are the best time. He's almost ever aggressive moment. So we're going to start going out the community Monday mornings and yeah, at the Epic school, I will tell you two of my, my two most aggressive students, both have job training experiences in the community. They're both out working and so far we've only had one episode of a challenging behavior, relatively low level when they're at work. Personally, I think it's because at this point, if they're just sick of school and going into work, it's a new environment. It's a new challenge. It's new people work. Makes sense when you're at work, you



know it's not the same task over and up. Cause even if it's a new skill being taught in the same behaviorally or format, it's a, they know the drill but so going out actually can help reduce the frequency of challenging behavior, but you just have to be really smart about it. Someone from our audience asked if, if Gina Greene agreed with you, Dr Gerhardt.

- Peter Gerhardt: [00:45:09](#) actually, she did and I have a quote in one of my talks that if done correctly from Gina from that conversation and it's done correctly, there is not a field that's more person centered than applied behavior analysis. and I've always taken out the heart. It's like I have to know this person, Like I have to understand how they see the world or I can't do this, you know, particularly work with individuals with autism. Like I can, you know, I could probably understand 90% of the behavior of the panelists very simply, you know, cause we have similar contingencies in our lives. We share similar values, right? My guys, they see things completely different than I do. So I always have to figure out what it is, is going to work for you and how I have to approach it. It's not how he has to change to meet me all the time.
- Amanda Fishley: [00:46:05](#) Right. Someone else also asked if we had any tools on social validity to assess things like parental goal, satisfaction and happiness. If there's some sort of like a questionnaire or a satisfaction index that you guys are aware of that exists
- Katie Hine: [00:46:24](#) For parents? Or...?
- Amanda Fishley: [00:46:28](#) yeah, it says validity measure to help assess things like parental goals, satisfaction or happiness. If there's a tool that we could use to measure those types of things,
- Jacqueline More...: [00:46:37](#) well usually, I'm going to speak to my experience creating parent goals and parents parents screening programs is, if the parents, you know, we have our hierarchies and we have our prompting and we know, forward chaining, backward chaining if the parent can deliver an instruction or if the parents can teach a skill to apply old. I just came back from a case yesterday where we're working on having the moms teaching the child how to wash the dishes. So if she can prompt correctly and if she can teach him the steps and error correct in the proper way, then I think taking data on her performance is B clinical team a good index of how well once we're gone, she comes in realized



teaching skills. So at least in taking data on parents performance that does give you, you know, taking data on the parents as if they were the instructors and you were trying to evaluate the instructors efficacy, how effective are the parents in delivering this? And that's, you know, that's all integrated in parent training.

- Peter Gerhardt: [00:47:57](#) yeah, I would just very quickly I have like, we do an annual parents satisfaction survey where we send it out to parents, they anonymously give us feedback. It's a bit nerve wracking at times, quite honestly. but it's the only way that I can get honest, direct feedback from them to know if I'm meeting their needs, not just theoretically their student needs. The other thing is there's a fairly large body of research in healthcare on sort of patient satisfaction and quality of life in, in patient interventions. And this that I always thought it would be something that could be adapted to our field, but it's sort of outside of my expertise. So if anybody out there is interested in doing that, you know, you want to do a dissertation, there's your, there's a great dissertation right there. So how do you adapt this body of research to us?
- Amanda Fishley: [00:48:43](#) That's interesting. And then share it with us when you're done.
- Peter Gerhardt: [00:48:48](#) Right.
- Erica Holding: [00:48:51](#) There are some things available for quality of life outcome indicators, but I don't know much about their validity and, but I have seen from questionnaires for parents measuring quality of life outcomes and satisfaction of services.
- Peter Gerhardt: [00:49:08](#) yeah. And I'm, you know, here we have this, the thing of quality of life and yes, it is a very under-researched area because it's also very hard to define, you know, what is quality of life. Almost all of the research and quality of life in individuals with ASD shows that they have a lower level of quality of life and compared to typical peer, but all the research that the exception of one or two studies is third person reporting. So it's mom or dad fill it out or the adult staff fill it out. Somebody else will do that for the person, not the person. The one or two studies that are out there, which are not very well designed. Studies that actually solicit that information from people on the spectrum tends to indicate that they perceive their lives is



better than we might expect. So the question comes down to are we holding people to like a neurotypical standard of quality of life when they may have a different vision of what quality of life is. This is not new. That this is something called the disability paradox, which is that people, typical people, neurotypical people look at people who are differently abled and can't imagine that they can have a good enough quality of life as we have because they have this particular skill or physical deficit. so it's not an unusual finding, but I do think it's a question that bears further research.

Amanda Fishley: [00:50:34](#)

Yeah, very interesting

Katie Hine: [00:50:40](#)

to actually applying some of the indices of happiness rather than relying on an interview or a verbal assessment. I mean, some of the happiest people I have the happiest people I've ever seen are groups of adults with disabilities at a Date program at lunchtime. They laugh, they have the same sense of humor, they all knew their peers, they know they're accepted. That's where I have seen the happiest people. And yet that kind of congregant setting is less acceptable to those of us without disabilities.

Amanda Fishley: [00:51:31](#)

Right. Yeah.

Amanda Fishley: [00:51:34](#)

Right, right. Yeah. All right. So kind of switching gears. We set the tone, you know, for this presentation and I think the presentations that will follow this in our series, but so today this presentation in particular is going to talk about the middle school transition. And when we talk about school transitions, we're typically talking about those that are on the cusp of adolescence. And this is typically around age 11 or 12, according to the literature. And as you can imagine, middle school and high school vary greatly. So that's why this particular webinar was put together because there's people working with middle schoolers that are getting ready to transition to high school, or they are in high school and they need, you know, better services with transition. So that's why we're looking at this middle school population. And we know that the middle school and high school are very different than middle schools tend to be a little bit more small, smaller, more local.



Amanda Fishley: [00:52:26](#) The students might not be switching classes, they might not be switching teachers, they might be with the same group of peers, maybe even since elementary school or when they were an early intervention depending on, you know, where they're going to school, but they're going to have more stable peers and teachers. So when they're hit with a transition, it can be challenging. And in particular there's obviously going to be social challenges. So we talk about the deficits with autism and social was a big one and we're going to talk about social skills later in our presentation. But it's definitely an area that is going to be challenging during transition as well as intellectual and organizational capability. So when you're asked to be more independent in high school, those types of things all come into place. How organized are you? Are you able to follow, you know, move from class to class, go to your locker, remember your combination?

Amanda Fishley: [00:53:19](#) There's a lot of things that go into transitioning from middle school to high school. I know when I was reading some of this literature, I thought, you know, a lot of neuro-typical students, they're looking forward to, you know, making new friends, being able to get a locker or switch classes, you know, looking forward to that independence. But the students that we have with autism may actually be dreading those types of things. They may, struggle with them or you know, in this article they said they experience anxiety with them. So it's something to think about when we're talking about the need to plan for these types of things.

Amanda Fishley: [00:53:56](#) We also know that there's a lack of literature on middle school transition. So a lot of times we talk about transition. A lot of people automatically think we're talking about 18 year olds that are transitioning out of high school into adulthood. But as we mentioned earlier, there are a lot of transitions that are occurring. I think middle school to high school is a big one. So looking at how do we better prepare them for this transition as well as setting the stage to be successful in adulthood. So you know there is a lack of literature in this area, but most of the literature that does exist would agree that middle school is an appropriate time to start prepping some of our students for the adult life. So looking at, you know, what's, what's the curriculum, what are we doing to better prepare them and getting started earlier rather than waiting until they're in high



school. Cause we're, I think dr Gerhardt mentioned this further last stop and a lot of places, so we need to make sure we're, we're preparing that,

Erica Holding:

[00:54:53](#)

you know, I have a question and you'll probably do this at that big school because I hold the Epic school is probably, it's not probably best practices that are out there. So we have expectations that we set expectations for our kids. Right. You know, I moved to Chicago about a year ago when we were living in Chicago. You know, school districts are not so great. My son was lucky enough to be at a magnet school and so I had certain expectations about what college he was going to go to because you know, Oh yeah, he was going to be able to go to a good school. But I wasn't thinking I'd be so about, I know in August of last year we moved out to Silicon Valley. So I'm living in Palo We are living in Palo Alto right now, Palo Alto, Stanford is right there. And so Stanford then basically is the school that everybody goes to.

Erica Holding:

[00:55:46](#)

So now I'm thinking, Oh, why can't my son go to Stanford? So, you know, my perspective has changed. My goal for my son has changed. Whether he achieves that or not, it doesn't really matter. Right? Well, what I'm doing right now is very different. So I'm making sure that he has all of the tools that he needs so that if he decides that he wants to go to Stanford, that the probability of success will be higher. I don't feel like we do that with kids that are on the spectrum and we set the expectation high enough for them so that okay, you know, there are examples and there's other people out there that had been able to go to IB. So you know, being on the spectrum is a disability, but you can overcome that.

Peter Gerhardt:

[00:56:30](#)

I think you're absolutely right. And I think, there are a number of sort of contingencies that impact us in this, you know, and you know, one professionally, one is the, the IEP itself, quite honestly, which sort of mandates that it's an attainable goal with what in one year. So you're sort of reinforced for writing relatively simple goals, you know, cause you know, you're gonna achieve that. You could say, Oh, you know, we met 98% of his IEP goals this year. Like not knowing what the IEP goals are. It doesn't, we don't know if that's any good or not. you know, the second sort of factor that comes into that is that we're taught in behavior analysis to look okay, relatively small units of behavior,



particularly when we talk about autism and being good analysis. You know, in other fields, you know, you know, sustainability behavior analysis, they look at much larger units of behavior.

Peter Gerhardt: [00:57:26](#)

You know, you look at some of the stuff that Rob Warner does in public schools, they look at much larger units of behavior with autism. We tend to look at, you know, the first 10 steps of handwriting is holding the pencil, drawing a line doing like when Nicole was handwriting. Yeah. We're like, like, so we often get stuck in these sub goals because we think that's the best way to do it when there may not be the research to do it. And what we've started to do now is what I think I was taught a long time ago. And then I think stop doing is do it first. Like go with the kid and do it first. Like give him a pencil and ask him to write his name first. A couple of time I was like, before you write the program for them, don't just take the program out of the and then apply it to him.

Peter Gerhardt: [00:58:14](#)

Like make it fit where he actually is and how he acquire skills. It's, you know, it's the old glow Waskow. Like if kids can't learn the way we teach, we need to teach the way they learn. And behavior analysis gives us multiple effective tools to teach kids on the spectrum. But we need to start thinking in terms of bigger units and behavior and not just, stands two feet from this teacher stands, two and a half feet from the teacher stand three feet from the teacher stands three and a half feet and like that sort of stuff. Right.

Jacqueline More...: [00:58:47](#)

[inaudible] I want to piggy back really quick on this notion of getting stuck in the tiny little minute behaviors. I see this a lot in the therapist that I supervise. They, you know, okay, he knows his colors, he mastered out and they're like, okay, what's next? And I go, well, now that he knows his colors, let's have him sort laundry. And they kind of look at me like, what are you talking about? And I go, this, what better way to generalize, you know, do you know your reds from your oranges and put the blues here and what's the difference between blue black, generalize it into something that can help them later on. I have a six year old who's starting laundry and a big nod to the parents who are this open and, kind of pragmatic about the goals that I brought in. But, you know, yeah, we can teach colors, but what's the real test of all of these discrete behaviors are these independent living skills? And that's constantly what I'm telling the parents





when I come in. they want him to ask and you know, I want this and okay, he masters that great he can, he can ask for what he wants. Okay, well now let's bring in can I have now what if he offers people? Do you want a really generalizing, these tiny discrete behaviors and turning them into tests of their independent

Lisa Berkowitz:

[01:00:16](#)

a hundred percent and that's the most important thing is that independence factor because if they can't do it independently and they don't do it on their own and they really haven't mastered a skill and I like that, you want to make sure that they could do things independently and I've changed the way I have my paraprofessionals take data because of that because when they're busy, I'm taking data on the different prompt levels. They actually are helping the students along. And my new way of taking data as the kids are getting older is if they need any type of help at all, then we're going to Mark it as a no, because really the goal is that in order for them to get a yes, which is master does, they have to be able to do it on their own. So if you tell them once to do something or you give them the SD, if they could do it totally on their own without any further help, then they've mastered it, then you can give them a yes for that task. If not, it's a no, because they've learned to sit back more and not help as much that way. So I think you've seen those working with the students, the importance of not over prompting is so important to get them to that independent level of functioning.

Peter Gerhardt:

[01:01:32](#)

And I would take that, I guess I would take that to the next level. Well, and that I want to look at, not just is it compliant to the SD, but does he recognize that the laundry basket is full and that becomes the stimulus prompt to do your laundry. Excellent. Yeah, that's sorta, that's like stop it. Just that. Yeah. So Katie, you were gonna say something

Katie Hine:

[01:01:56](#)

going to say that that was a really good idea because that solves, it addresses two issues. If your parent is busy taking data, then they are engaged and are less likely to overprompt because they already have something to do. And so it may actually increased independence responding because your parent is engaged.



- Lisa Berkowitz: [01:02:27](#) Absolutely. And it's important that paraprofessionals be trained because sometimes they feel that they're not doing their job, like they're assigned to be a one-on-one. So they think they need to be the parent or they need to do everything for the learner. So to me, one of the most important aspects of getting an independent learner is to teach the paraprofessionals how to sit back and that you're doing your job when the student can do it for themselves.
- Erica Holding: [01:02:56](#) Challenges. Yeah. , but there's like a really great point and I think even further for me, the biggest challenge, one if not the biggest, but one of the challenges that I've experienced in working with transition into middle school is working with the parents at a much younger age. Like working with them, doing laundry at six years old is great because big issue that comes up for me is a lot of the parents I work with have a really difficult time watching the child struggle with something and they ended up finishing stuff for them, you know, and then you end up with an adult and you say, when they come down to program, you go, can he do his laundry? I'm like, Oh yeah, he can do his laundry. And telling me about how he does his laundry. And it turns out that he always leaves a laundry in the washing machine and he's never puts it in the dryer.
- Erica Holding: [01:03:43](#) Some mom takes it out and puts it in the dryer for him. And then let me forget that it's in the dryer. And then you know, if you're in a laundry mat, half your clothes is gone. You know, so it's like these have real life contingencies for a cross into adulthood and if we're not working with the parents and educating them how important it is to allow their child to experience frustration and cope with that at a young age and teach them that sometimes these are going to be hard but you're going to be able to do this, then we're not setting them up for an independent life as an adult if we're constantly making sure that they're comfortable and quote unquote happy. Sure. If that makes sense.
- Amanda Fishley: [01:04:26](#) Right? Yeah. And I think there's a really good article, and I can't remember if it's from Dennis read or not, but the skill building and happiness, they go hand in hand. They're not, they're not separate and they should go hand in hand, like being happy. Does that mean they shouldn't be learning and you know, experiencing those frustrations and we shouldn't be doing



those. We should be doing those things for them. They go hand in hand. All right. So we are about halfway through our allotted time. So I want to take a quick break and then we'll jump back in and talk about some of the requirements that we have here in the United States in terms of transition services. And then we'll start talking about the framework to writing a transition plan and profile. So we'll take a quick five minute break and we'll be back.

- Speaker 11: [01:05:20](#) [Music plays for a minute]
- Karen Chung: [01:08:22](#) Hey Peter, I got a question. Peter, can you hear me?
- Peter Gerhardt: [01:08:30](#) Yes.
- Karen Chung: [01:08:31](#) So difference between a vocational vocational and job, right? When we've talked a little bit about that or when I sent you an email about something and I say vocational and you said you preferred to use the word job skills. So how do you see being different and why? What, why is your preference on job?
- Peter Gerhardt: [01:08:55](#) Because vocational skills in my experience tended to mean, a set of production skills That would then translate into more of a sheltered workshop environment. employment is not just this production aspect, but also this much more complex social aspect of navigation aspect and safety aspect. And employment skills I think are just more complex than what we really need to aim for. And I think the term vocational has become, not the, not for any real, but it's become very narrow in terms of this production. But he can package 14 bags of fruit loops, you know, in 10 minutes that that's a vocational scale, you know, so that's why I tend to make that difference between employment skills.
- Karen Chung: [01:09:52](#) Okay. Got it. Thank you. Yeah. Yeah.
- Peter Gerhardt: [01:09:59](#) It's also quite honestly, nobody ever asks him, what's your vocation? You know, they say, what's your job? What do you do? Like, where do you work? Like, you know,
- Peter Gerhardt: [01:10:09](#) well, that's true.



Amanda Fishley:

[01:10:10](#)

All right, so let's talk about the individuals with disabilities education act or IDEA, this is a law that makes available a free, inappropriate public education to the eligible children with disabilities. And this is in the United States and insurance, special education and really the services to those children. And we were having a dialogue. and we hope to have it with you guys as well, our panelists about, you know, how this is in effect and what is it. Like I mentioned, this is something that's in the United States. So as special learning, we do work a lot with international clients, international families that, you know, they don't, they don't have anything, they don't have regulations or laws or anything put in place. So it's something that, you know, we should be thankful for even if it has a long way to go. But it's something that I wanted to discuss with you, but this is for students that are 16 in older and this is in the individualized transition plan and as part of the IEP or the individualized education and the transition planning space that it must start before the student turns 16 be individualized and be based on their strengths and preferences and interests.

Amanda Fishley:

[01:11:24](#)

That's the goal of what we're doing, right? This is why we're having this conversation. and it should also include opportunities to develop functional skills for work and community life. And the transition services should also include instruction, obviously those community experiences and then the development of employment, other post-school, adult living objective objectives and if appropriate, and the daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation may also be included. So where you're working, whether you're working in a school or maybe you're working in a mental health agency, do you have additional requirements for those that are at this transition age? And do you feel that this is enough or do you have suggestions on other things?

Peter Gerhardt:

[01:12:15](#)

You know, one thing I just wanna, add news I have, and I don't know who said it, like I want to say Ben Franklin, but I don't think that's it, but it's, you know, democracy is the worst form of government except for all others. IDEA is the worst that have lockstep for all others. Like, you know, it, I mean, parents will complain about it, professionals complain about it. You know, I, you know, sometimes I say, you know, well, it sucks, but it sucks less than what other countries have. So it really is something that we need to take full advantage of because we do have this



entitlement, you know, there's funds or services that, you know, we're the ones who need to sort of really capitalize on this opportunity. Because it ends and at the time limited opportunity. That's the hard part about transition planning. It ends like, you know, you turn 18 and you turned 21 and boom it's over. So I just think it's so important that we understand the importance of this law in terms of what we can do with our guys.

Amanda Fishley: [01:13:21](#)

Right, exactly. And you know, I was doing some research to figure out what are the international requirements, abroad. So you know, we have this in here in the United States, but what does it look like in other countries where we know services might not be as great as what we have here. And there was a lot, there was a lot and the research was challenging to actually find and navigate the different documents with the laws and if they did exist. So we reached out to, you know, our community of behavior analyst and we got some responses. And in particular one from a BCBA in India saying, you know, we don't even have the services for young children is not necessarily an entitlement. That's something that the parents pay for. But transition services are something we only, we were still dreaming about. So there's not anything in place for them. Certainly no laws or regulations that are helping support that. It doesn't mean that they're, they don't have those services. You know, I really don't know. But we were hoping, you know, if we have any attendees that are, are from another country that could shine some light on or just speak to what it looks like internationally, if we have anybody, even from Canada, which I know the services are slightly different here. Do we have anybody that is from another country that would be willing to share?

Amanda Fishley: [01:14:42](#)

So someone said in Ontario, Canada, there's ADA provided to all individuals under 18 years of years old. That's good. Melanie, would you mind if I unmuted your microphone to ask you questions?

Melanie: [01:15:06](#)

Yeah, sure

Amanda Fishley: [01:15:06](#)

okay. so are these transition services, are those similar to what we have here in United States or



- Melanie: [01:15:17](#) so? Because the programs are all individualized based on the person. Some of those are specifically about transition, but they don't necessarily have to be a bad transition. We in every single plan that we create, we have generalization and maintenance put into place. But I think that the standardization, um, we have a new, Ontario has a program that's going into place and that will be, we're hoping will, that will be part of that, the planning for that.
- Amanda Fishley: [01:15:50](#) Great. Thank you for sharing that.
- Amanda Fishley: [01:15:55](#) And we have a couple others. Well, Donna, would you mind unmuting and just sharing real quick what you commented
- Amanda Fishley: [01:16:12](#) hi there. Can you hear me.
- Donna: [01:16:14](#) okay, I'll go ahead and read it.
- Amanda Fishley: [01:16:16](#) Go ahead.
- Donna: [01:16:18](#) Oh, can you hear me?
- Donna: [01:16:21](#) Oh great. yes. I'm originally from the United States, so I obviously have a little bit of a background from the USA IP's but here in Canada I believe we'd like to call it a living document. It's more that we put down ideas of parents and school personnel are interested. And looking at however, we only meet very infrequently and it's a document that's somewhat guides us, but if we don't meet the goals, we just put them forward to the next year. So I don't think it's as conclusive and strong as a document as a it can be.
- Amanda Fishley: [01:16:54](#) Right. Yeah. We also had someone share that, is it, they have a student from Ukraine and dad reported that there were no services there, which prompted their family to move to the USA. The schools for individuals with disabilities, there are co-ops run by their parents. Yeah. It's just an interesting, you know, interesting. We, I think it's important for us to reflect on that. It's something that it's really easy to, to not look into and complain about the services that we have here in the United States. Even if we do have, you know, some work to do, which no doubt we do, but just looking at what services are like internationally is certainly an important consideration,



especially as as I mentioned, special learning works internationally. We have clients from 103 different countries, so we take it really seriously. When you know, we're not always talking about the Western culture, but what do these services look like in other countries and you know, what can we do to keep spreading and disseminating behavior analysis is really important. So thank you everybody for for sharing those. I appreciate that.

Peter Gerhardt: [01:17:52](#)

Well, you know, I would just add one little weird fun fact, but it's that the number of disability labels a country has is generally directly proportional to their gross national, gross national product. So if you're a wealthy country, you can afford to actually have special education services and have special educations that are individualized by different disability labels and you can, you know, in the United States we have every 10 years we changed the entire psychiatric labeling system, you know, through the DSM process. You know, because we have the resources to do that, you know, countries with lower GDP, it just is very difficult to even consider doing some of these things when you're dealing with much other like much bigger issues. It was for the general population.

Amanda Fishley: [01:18:40](#)

Yeah, that's a really good point, right. I'm going to turn it over to you, Peter. To kick off the framework for developing a transition plan.

Peter Gerhardt: [01:18:52](#)

Okay. Well in my experience and, and again, like we have truly an awesome panel here today. I do want to say that I really think this is how transition planning should work. It should be a collaborative process. It's not one or two people sitting down and writing a plan. It's a real open given take. And I also think going with let the, the one person said from Canada about being an open living document, I think the transition plan itself has to be a living document because quite honestly it's a best guess. You know, you're looking into the future. Nobody has a crystal ball, nobody has a, you know, so you're, you're shooting high and you're making estimates that you may have to change. But for me, again, that's the beauty of a behavior analyst. Cause we have this thing called data and I, and I get to sort of analyze the data and say this didn't work.



Peter Gerhardt: [01:19:43](#) Let's try something else. So again, like I have no ego in it except with the dataset. So it was like at the data point me one direction, that's what I'm going to follow. But, I think it is important that the whole process, I start with, some sort of assessment, but you know, the essentials for living pedigree, he's tool is out there. Excellent tool, very um, kind of high effort to do but very useful if you learn how to do it. Somebody is here, you know, the assessment of functional living skills. For me like I think the most important assessment is actually NVivo assessments cause going out with individuals and seeing what they can do going into different environments, presenting them with different tasks, trying different interventions, like actually doing it as opposed to doing it sort of formalized almost always third person report, you know, can the person do X, can the person do Y?

Peter Gerhardt: [01:20:46](#) So that for me is this combination of these formal assessments, with, you know, NVivo assessments. I also, you know, I like doing the Vineland, I like the adaptive behavior scales. Only cause I'm very interested in adaptive behavior but there's so, they're not sensitive enough really to show change over like an IEP here in most cases unless you make some huge leap in competence. But I think there are good tools. I said before it is person centered transition planning with parent involvement. At the end of the day on a hired hand, that's what I, I am hired to do this and then the kid goes home to them and then after 18 or 21, it's like it's them for the rest of their life. Like I have to respect and value that partnership that you have with parents in the transition planning process. And I will sometimes hear, you know, how do you deal with parents who have very high expectations, unrealistic expectations. I will tell you, I'd rather work with a parent with unrealistic expectations that no one with very low expectations. Okay. The one with unrealistic expectations, I can probably shape down a little bit, you know, but still I can try and shoot higher. The one who has very low expectations for what their son or daughter can do. They're very hard to sort of motivate to think bigger. So I really prefer working with someone who may have somewhat more unrealistic expectations.

Erica Holding: [01:22:30](#) Oh yeah, you sure? I just want to share it at like a kind of a, one of my happy stories with one of the clients I worked with, I've worked with this little boy in New York from the time he was





five years old and his parents were very high, standard oriented and that he was going to be in regular ed and he was going to be fully included. And you know, the team often times times would, we would struggle to support that which struggled to important support the vision that they had for him. And he actually did really well and it brought me to the point of realizing that sometimes my expectations aren't as high as I should be for my clients end up. They can actually surprise me. And this little boy you know, I, I've worked with him, he's 23 years old now and when he was an adolescent, he had a significant regression and had started having seizures and lost a lot of skills that we had taught him.

Erica Holding:

[01:23:24](#)

And I was so worried about him. His parents were the parents that were, you know, never gonna give up on their kid. And now he got into, he got into a, an AA program, culinary program because he loves to cook and now he's working as a sous chef in a sushi restaurant at 23 years old. And I never in my wildest dreams like, pretty much uses one word phrases when he talks, but he loves making sushi. And I in a million years probably wouldn't have predicted that he wouldn't be working where he is. He's never know. You never know.

Peter Gerhardt:

[01:24:03](#)

Yeah. No, that's very cool. Yeah, no, and I think we, we often track too low, you know, when I think, we make predictions like he won't be able to do that. Like I hear this a lot. Oh, he won't be able to do that. And I always say, you don't get to say that. He gets to say that, not like, let's go out and see if he can do it. And then he'll tell me like, you know, the student is always right. So that's what I go with when I do this sort of stuff. Otherwise it's relatively easy to undershoot professionally and assured me, I think you're doing the right thing. It's not like you being lazy. But, if I could go back to the beginning of my career, I would just study motivation. I would start EOS, MOS like that. Well, because when my students are motivated, they can do amazing things, you know, things well beyond what their test scores say that they can do, but then they won't do the laundry because there isn't that,

Jacqueline More...:

[01:25:15](#)

Natural and community based instruction. And every program I have, I have some kind of community safety role. I have some kind of natural environment goal with that appearance is really in charge of, and I try to impart to the paraprofessionals that if



we're going out to practice crossing the street, the, the therapist who's walking with the family, they, they should not be the ones holding this kid's hands. It's up to the mom and then the mom's scared. Well, what if he runs away? Like, well that's, that's the point of this program. I mean, the professional is there to help and to intervene if anything goes wrong. But we ourselves are never going to be going to target with this kid by ourselves. We're not going to be taking him to these doctor's appointments by ourselves. That's up to parents and this natural, you know, getting out of the house, getting away from the table is something that is, so I just hold it as so vitally important to all of the programs because at the end of the day, when we leave, they're not living their life at this table with these flashcards. They have to go run their lives. The parents have to do what they need to do. The kids have to come with them. And we're like Peter said, we're hired hands. We are not going to be babysitting this child forever. So the parents need to really understand that we're there to help them take charge of teaching their kid how to be independent. And that's very hard for parents to understand.

Lisa Berkowitz:

[01:26:47](#)

And it's definitely, very important for everybody in the field that when we're working with parents so that we allow them that they are the parents and they're still in charge. And although we may have, a background in psychology or an education or an ABA, there's still the parent and they definitely need to drive, large portion of the transition because they live with the child and they'll be taking care of them long after. So it's very important to weigh in what their values and their belief systems are. And to be respectful of that. I know sometimes I'll have, therapists tell me, well, the parent wants them to learn this, but they'll, they'll never learn how well you can't say that. And if a parent would like us to try, then we're going to try and if we're successful, that's a wonderful, great thing. And if we're not successful, we'll try to compromise and try to make it so that the parents are happy with where we've gone with this goal or skill. Well we definitely should always try.

Peter Gerhardt:

[01:27:46](#)

Right. Absolutely. You know with this, the curriculum component here, it is a very highly individualized process. So there are some established curriculums out parallel go over them. You know, I think some of them are good for some basic needs, but again, we want to write programs. It's upon what his



particular goals are in the context of which this goal directed to be taught and the behavior is expected to be displayed. So it's going to be a little bit different for every kid. Maybe even if it's basically the same skill. So it's so important. I will also point out with this natural environment, community based instruction is we look at it that way. Once you step outside your classroom, every skill set in the world has three parts. There's a production part, a social part and navigation part. So if you're going grocery shopping, the production part is, you know, matching the picture list that you have for shopping with the item on the shelf, picking it up and putting in a basket navigation is getting the car moving around, not running into people like for like the social part is what are you doing?

- Peter Gerhardt: [01:28:55](#) Someone says, excuse me, what are you doing? He was about to leave, like actually waiting appropriate in line, keeping her for me distance. You know, it becomes a very complex instructional goal. So you know, we have to sort of look at how this go really is applied, not just how we think it is. And I really recommend, again, going out with your students and trying this stuff because we typical people are so amazingly competent that we do so much stuff without even realizing that we're doing it. So if you think you're gonna write your TA or your instructional program without going out there and actually observing and seeing how the student does and like it's going to be wrong. I will guarantee it may only be 10% wrong, but it's going to be wrong because there's stuff that you just do that you don't even realize you do. So the curriculum really has to be tailored to the person in their environment and for the skills that we're going to be working on, which is then all this other, this community based instruction thing. So,
- Amanda Fishley: [01:30:02](#) yeah.
- Amanda Fishley: [01:30:06](#) Sorry, did I skip ahead? Do you need the side still?
- Peter Gerhardt: [01:30:10](#) No.
- Amanda Fishley: [01:30:11](#) Okay.
- Amanda Fishley: [01:30:15](#) This was just a, just to put in reference the different elements of an IEP and we're transition planning fits on there and as being a very important part of the education, the individualized



education program. And Peter's going to talk about how to and some strategies to run an effective IEP meeting.

Peter Gerhardt: [01:30:38](#) Well, I mean these tend to be, if you work in a public school system, these can be relatively contentious meetings. It's not unusual if you're in a public school system to have 14 people at an IEP meetings, six of them with tape recorders and one of them being a lawyer. If there's one lawyer that has to be, yeah, I mean we want to try to figure out the manpower hours for an IEP meeting for this one student and it was something like \$9,000. Just the time of the people involved in the meeting, you know, it's not really economically efficient way to do this. And you know, if you look at some of the research on transition planning and how parents see it and parents generally report that they're dissatisfied with the level of homeschool communication that we really don't see them as partners.

Peter Gerhardt: [01:31:32](#) We see them as just like just the parent okay. When they really are equal, if not more important partners in what we do. Parents generally assume the point that we will make inaccurate, low assumptions about the student's ability as opposed to shooting higher. And that we tend to track students into the things that we know how to do. Like we know how to coordinate, so he goes into an adult, they have programs. So that's how we're going to do this as opposed to really looking at much for individuals or we have people who work at these two jobs, so we're going to put them in one of these two jobs as opposed to really expanding what the possibility is. And then I think there is a real concern that we all should talk about at length at some point. Probably not today, but you know, I have a personal, I have a bunch of personal quirks about stuff in our field, but I see a lot of schools with, their mission is to allow individuals with autism spectrum disorder to achieve their highest potential that's there.

Peter Gerhardt: [01:32:37](#) And it's like, but that's a cop out quite honestly because no matter where the kid ends up, we say that was his highest potential. Good luck and like go on. There's no operational definition of highest potential. And quite honestly, I really, really hope I didn't hit my highest potential in high school. I'm 58 and I hope my highest potential is still ahead of me. You know, like it really needs to be something that like goes on. So one of the things that we've done is that we've said that our students don't



graduate employable, they graduate employed. Our students don't graduate as social skills. They graduate as part of a social community where they live. Our school, our students, don't, aren't under our under arced names, control understatement control the environment where they live, work and play. And our students are able to self manage both behavior, excesses and behavior deficits, to the standards set forth by the community in which I engage.

Peter Gerhardt: [01:33:33](#)

So we have these measures that are observable that we can shoot for. And the reason that we do that is we recognize too that the adult system isn't going to be able to do that stuff. Then again, going back to this IDEA law that we have the resources, we have the staff, we have the money, we have to make this happen and if he graduates just employable and he hasn't, he's not going to get a job in the adult world. They just don't have the resources to do it. And you know, one of the things, going back to what Katie said earlier, like, you know, I think my job is just to make sure that people have opportunities and options that I want to make sure that if you're not working as an adult and you're in a day Hab program, that it's not because you never were given the chance. I want to give you the chance. And then if it doesn't work out, if I feel like you don't like this, but then doing it today have like great, I mean that's, that's the right place for you. But my job is to make sure that you have as many options and opportunities so that you have choices in your life and not just we track you there. So this is where the accountability comes in. Like we need to be accountable to these bigger.

Katie Hine: [01:34:57](#)

Yes, I agree that it's not because you didn't have a chance to do anything else. Excellent point.

Peter Gerhardt: [01:35:03](#)

Yeah. And I think, you know, I, like you said you like they can see they're happy cause they're with peers, they're with that. And I always joke about it, like 99% of my peers are in the autism behavior analysis field. So I had an autism specialist or label. You'd say, that's my special interest. And you were trying to get me engaged with people who don't have that interest because I need to expand my repertoire. It's like no, that's where I'm fluent. That's where I like to be. Yeah. So I think, you know, I understand both sides and it's an ongoing thing, but you know, there is because a thing about, you know, wanting to be with



people who are like you who are understand, you know, a friend of mine and Donna who's on the spectrum won't go long story short. but at one time, she said, all you need in your life is one good typical friend. And I said, how come? Just one. And she said, there's two of you are too hard to understand. That makes sense. You know, like she's much more comfortable with other people on the spectrum than she is hanging out with a bunch of typical folk. And I get that. And I have to admit that that's her decision. So, next

Peter Gerhardt: [01:36:26](#)

because the next slide go. Yeah. You know, the data supported like it's a good study, but I think it's still, there's limited their sample issue, so it's not gonna apply to all cases. Okay. But I do think running an effective transition IEP meeting begins well before the transition IEP meeting. you know, it really does begin early on even in establishing a positive working relationship with the family and that they don't feel like they're not, you know, an active part of this. But in terms of the actual transition meeting, one of the things that we do as a minimum four weeks before the transition IEP, we do sort of a fake IEP where the parents come in and we'd come in and, you know, anybody else who wants to participate, come in and we just brainstorm ideas. You know, we say like, what are we, what should we be working, you know, where are we going to go with this?

Peter Gerhardt: [01:37:23](#)

How are we going to like, like, what's our goal in doing this? And we have a five year plan, which I'll talk a little bit later, but after that meeting, then it's our responsibility to by three weeks, actually send a draft home to the parents so they can actually see what the results of this were and what we might be able to present. To the school district at least as part of, as the transition part of the IEP, they have a week to get it back to us with their comments. And then we have a week to get back to that so that by the time we go to the meeting, like we have agreement on what we're doing and it's been a collaborative process. It hasn't been, I haven't sent home 16 goals and said, here's the transition IEP, please sign this. You know, I said, what are your goals for your son or daughter?

Peter Gerhardt: [01:38:12](#)

but then, and I, and I want to be very clear. I often tell families, I work with my money when I tell, you know, like if you think something is a good idea and I really think it's not, I haven't, that's why obligation to tell you that's not a good idea. You



know, and you may get mad at me and you may get upset with me, but that's my ethical responsibility and that's why I went to school all these years and have all this experience, you know, otherwise you could run the program if you, so while I'm very collaborative with parents, you know, I also if I think it's a bad idea, that's a very bad idea. Well, they explain why. Yeah. And I just think that when you say, well, we don't do that here, unless it's something that's not evidence based. Like, you know, we don't, it's not a real viable excuse. you know, if it's something that's not evidence based and that's a different situation. But, so I really do think running the effective meeting begins well before the meeting itself so that the important players, the professional team and the parent team are really on the same page and then they're presenting to the school district. But it isn't

Jacqueline More...: [01:39:21](#)

and I want to just give a personal note, you know, on, on what Peter was talking about, how if it's a bad idea, we as professionals do have a responsibility to communicate to the parents or to, you know, really understand what the data's telling us, what the client is telling us. Because in my sister's own experience, she, she's completely nonverbal, doesn't vocalize a single thing. She can communicate very well though of what she's feeling if she wants to do what you ask her to or not. She's a 23 year old young woman and she, in her IEP and in a speech therapist, you know, they were pushing vocalization, she will say one word, you know, phrases by such and such a date and it wasn't met and it wasn't met and it kept being pushed back. And part of it is, services back when we were younger just weren't what they are now.

Jacqueline More...: [01:40:19](#)

But, you know, they didn't realize that she could read until she was 14 years old. And so now this entire world opened up where, you know, they can give her text and have her answer via text, teachers, speech now. I mean, nobody was trying anything but literally sitting in front of her and saying, repeat after me and it, you know, it lost so much time. You know, and, and now obviously we have a lot of adaptations, but if one person had when she was eight, nine, 12 that, you know, maybe she's not going to speak. Why don't we try signs? Why don't we try PEX? Why don't we try something else? you know, that is a big part of us being in the home and in the school or in either one, but really understanding, you know, the whole nuances of



what is communication, what is, you know, living skills, what does transition mean? Transition doesn't just mean going on to the next year. And if you don't meet the goal, you write a new duty that you know, there's so much more to transition than just what's on the paper.

Jacqueline More...:

[01:41:30](#)

Right. One of the things that I just wanted to jump in and what you had said is that maybe she didn't want to communicate through verbal. And a lot of times we'll give a typical child options and then for neuro-typical developing children will say, no, this is what they're going to do. And it's really important to allow them choices and options, in all different areas, whether it be communication, whether it be with mainstreaming. I see that a big issue with mainstreaming, we have LRE and it sometimes turns into all the students have to go to the assembly. Well, let's ask the students, cause I could tell you that some of the students would love to go to the assemblies. Some of them don't want to go because it's overstimulating. and it's not something they'd like to partake in. So definitely when we look at, putting together a transition plans and putting together IEP goals, you definitely need to individualize them, but allow the students to be part of that decision making process because their life and a typical child we give options to. And it's important that we allow that to all our students. All our learners have choices about their own lives.

Amanda Fishley:

[01:42:40](#)

[inaudible] yeah, exactly. And I just want to point out that someone, in our audience, Gina said, FYI, attainment sells a curriculum called whose future is it anyway that teaches students how to participate in their IEP meetings. This is for students with more advanced repertoires of great self advocacy skills. Yeah. And that's obviously a big part of the IEP meeting is the student is the most important stakeholder, which we're going to talk about.

Peter Gerhardt:

[01:43:06](#)

Yeah, absolutely. And I do want to just talk Jacqueline very quick. This is about wasted time, which is one of my, I think it's the biggest sin that we can get in our field is that we waste time and it's the one resource we have IDEA entitlement legislation that provides funding. We have gifted, talented, highly educated BCBA's. We have gifted, talented, highly educated, special education teachers. We have good instructional staff that really want to be there. We have speech and language, we





have all these other people. We don't have time, like the one resource we'll never ever have enough of it's time. So, you know, and especially as behavior analyst, like it kills me when I go in and I see kids who've been on instructional programs, you know, between like 60 and 75% accuracy for six months and has been no change. You know, like we collect data for a reason, not because it looks pretty, you know, so we have to use it. And then sometimes you gotta make a decision to move on to say, you know what didn't work. Let's move on. We can come back to it later maybe, but we have to go. So

Erica Holding: [01:44:23](#)

I think you.

Peter Gerhardt: [01:44:26](#)

Somebody say something Erica?

Erica Holding: [01:44:29](#)

I think so. I pick up. Yeah I was just thinking about one of the best IEP is I think our transition meetings I've ever participated in was a time when I had a young woman, 16 years old. She's in a high school and they, the school district was advocating for her to have a paraprofessional, chowder her through the hallways and also be near her, on at the lunch in the lunch room. And this young woman, you know, if she had to just talk verbally, if she just had to have a conversation back and forth, it would make her very anxious and very nervous and she would often jump in place and start to flap and laugh out of nervousness. So we encourage her to write down how she felt about having aid around her. And she came to that, that IEP and sat down and had written out exactly how it made her feel to have the paraprofessional following her around the school.

Erica Holding: [01:45:28](#)

And it was so incredibly powerful for the people in the room to hear directly from her how, you know, why she was requesting for the removal of this aid. And, you want to talk about wasting time or resources that clearly this person, she was ready, she was ready to, to have more independence and that paraprofessional could probably serve another student better than her. So she was able to self advocate in that situation. And so, you know, you talk about third party, you know, telling him, well she can do this and she can't do that or perceptions when it's possible to and include the students or the client's own words. It's so incredibly powerful and important to do.



- Peter Gerhardt: [01:46:18](#) Yeah, and that's, I mean on this slide, I mean I do think when we wrote it up like this turn should be first like on top of the parents. Like it's not really in any particular order, but you know, who are the stake holders? It should be student first. And that's, you know, when I first went to the Epic school or when I got hired and I told the board that I don't work for them, I worked for the students. And if I meet the needs of the students, that I meet the needs of the parents. And if I meet the needs of parents that I need the needs of our funding agencies and we didn't funding agencies, then I meet the needs of society at large. And if I do that, then I work, for the board, that's how I fulfill my responsibility. But it's gotta be that sort of top up thing because all of these are important. You know, all of these are very important like beneficiaries of what we do and need to remember that as we move forward.
- Amanda Fishley: [01:47:10](#) Right.
- Amanda Fishley: [01:47:14](#) And these are just some quotes, you know, from the literature, which I found pretty interesting. I'll read them real quickly. You know, when crafting such comprehensive school based interventions, it's critical that they're designed in ways that are feasible and acceptable within typical high-schools interventions with strong evidence of efficacy, but limited social validity, validity are likely to be delivered with poor fidelity. So I think this, this actually makes a ton of sense to me and I know not just for schools but for families too, that when we're designing interventions that needs to work for everybody, even if it is very effective, but the social validity part has to be there. So I think making sure that we're involving all of those stakeholders and the decision making process is really important. And then also education educator knowledge of evidence-based tactics for use with transition age students with ASD may lead to the development of student's skills that result in qualitatively different post-school outcomes for older adolescents and adults with, with ASC. So pretty interesting. All right, so you know what? We have some scenarios I want to run through and Katie, I know you have to go. Here's students. I wanted to give you an opportunity to ask your question to Dr. Gerhardt before you have to leave today. So you submitted a scenario, and I have it in here, but if you want to just kind of summarize that and discuss that scenario, we'll start with yours first and then we'll go through some of these.



- Katie Hine: [01:48:43](#) Essentially, this is a young man who doesn't use language and it was not because his parents didn't care or the school didn't care. They simply didn't have the knowledge base. And by the time he reached adolescence, he was large enough that he was no longer easy to handle and he learned to use a correction, to get people to back off. And now they're kind of stuck. His teacher is one of the most awesome instructors I've ever seen. But in addition, he's a wrestling coach. So he had to show the young man that he could do a deal with physically for Sean, was willing to let him make progress and to work with him. So I wanted to know, do you have any suggestions? Because I know a lot of, of individuals who are in this situation where their, their physical size gives them the upper hand and then trying to get that back without resorting to more physicality.
- Peter Gerhardt: [01:50:26](#) You know, it's, it's an incredibly complex, question. And I often, you know, obviously cause it was simple, like you would've figured it out a long time ago. Like it's a art today and it would just be that, I see which child you behavior are really complex challenges. You know, it's not like I can say I'll put that behavior on extension anymore and it works. Cause it's, it does a lot of early people know how to do that. So, you know, by the time they get to me and these are challenging behaviors, they're pretty complicated multifunction behaviors. The first thing I tend to do in those situations, and I have no data or research to back this up. It's just when I, I like to do, and I found it very useful is I will look at behavior patterns and try and do some sort of functional as a splint of the time when aggression doesn't occur.
- Peter Gerhardt: [01:51:25](#) What are the conditions under which it's it's least likely to occur. We often focus our assessment of towns on where it's most likely to occur, but I think it's helpful if we can figure out when it doesn't occur. One of my older, very aggressive students, broke my nose twice. This young man. We found that once wasn't enough. I had to like get it done twice. One of the things that we found was that if he is watching old movie musicals in the background, he's much more open to instruction. So it wasn't a distract, it was just a, an environmental condition that was preferred for him that we were then able to do some of that. Now, over time we were able to sort of fade it out. We put it in his control. He could turn



it on, turn it off whenever you want it to do it, you know, so we were able to shift some of that stuff.

Peter Gerhardt: [01:52:24](#)

So we look to get some of those sort of things. The, the third thing part quite honestly, I don't know, situations is I go back to, to the drawing board and I start all over again. I'm like, okay, what, what, what's in his IEP now? What has to be there? What shouldn't be there? Let's split it a new IEP, let's give up a whole new program. If he's an adult, what's going up a whole new, like why do we have to keep teaching and doing the same things over and over again when we know he doesn't like it. The fourth thing with those individuals is, and it really relates as much to treatment fidelity and response efficiency, is we look at establishing, you know, has control of our behavior intervention programs and relatively short units of time. So we may only do it for half an hour a day, whether this [inaudible] onset and offset to see if we can't establish it there.

Peter Gerhardt: [01:53:23](#)

Cause we try and do it across the whole day. There's always something that sort of disrupts it and you know, it makes it less useful. We also have to be very aware of this is a highly reinforced response. It's so well learned response. This is his most fluent response. You know, it's his easiest thing, you know, and you know, under times of duress, we always work to our best burns response first. So even if he has some communicative alternative, you know, the, he can say, I want to break on and get out of here and leave me the F alone. Like whatever it is, if that's not responded to essentially like he's still going to be aggressive because he knows that works, you know? So by doing it again, like in a short period of time, we can try and build up some of these, functional alternatives.

Peter Gerhardt: [01:54:16](#)

Whether it is, leave me alone, I want a break, I just wanna put my head down, whatever it is, in a short period of time. So we don't run into some of those situations that make it challenging. But the bigger point I guess is that the response that we do has to be incredibly easy. I forget who, but someone said sometimes what we require like vocal verbal responses, that's really freaking hard for our guys. Like I think that's an incredibly effortful process for a lot of the people we work with. So is it just hitting the button that says break or whatever I guess or something really simple and easy low effort that is going to get you. And initially I don't care if it a half hour interval, he hits it



50 times. If he'd look, if that's what it takes for him to learn that during the [inaudible], if I keep hitting it, this, I don't have to be aggressive and I can just sit there and I don't have to do anything, then I can sort of use that to build back in. But you know as well, if not better than me, it's going to be a long process. There isn't going to be this one thing to do that awesome. The switch flips and he's, you know, it goes away, you know, because well learned behavior, standard repertoire, very, very long time for all of us.

Peter Gerhardt: [01:55:31](#)

Yeah. Yeah. It's a people thing. So, what's he like at home?

Erica Holding: [01:55:44](#)

He's very, he's a very similar in a lot of ways. His family has done a very good job of establishing preferred places, preferred items, access. He has a tree house in the backyard that he has access to anytime he wants to go there. His family is very laid back. They have a pay for their own staff and during the evenings and afternoons and those people take him places and do things with him. So they really, at home there are far fewer demands and far fewer complexities in the environment and he has complete access to, he can take a bath anytime he wants. He can go through this chip tree house, he can lay on the couch, he can walk the dog. So they've done a really awesome job of, engineering his environment at home.

Peter Gerhardt: [01:57:03](#)

Yeah. And that's great. I'm just, I'm just glad, like the family is safe and that he's happy and that's, you know, I think that's great. One other thing that you know, there was an article published probably 20 years ago, by the people at PCD, Princeton child development Institute was in Java, when, when Krantz and... [inaudible] yeah, yeah but they did a, they call it timeout rehearsal for a student that they shaped up going to timeout as a well learned fluent response. So he would start to get anxious. They would say go to time out and he'd put himself in timeout. So they'd have to get to the physical thing. We've had adapted it to teach like series of alternative compliance directions. So with one of my students, if you starts to get aggressive, I said the first is put your hands in your pockets and then sit on the floor. And we had to like practice that over and over again. Highly reinforce it. So now it's a fairly automatic response. When we do, it interrupts the behavior very quickly. Now I think sometimes he thinks like, wait a minute, what am I doing? Like why am I, you know? But if it does work to sort of,



you know, interrupt the behavior chain of, aggressive aggression, but it's an extension of the work. And you know, Lynn and Pat, I think probably like 20 years ago

- Peter Gerhardt: [01:58:42](#) they published the article. So that's probably the, anybody else have any ideas? That's probably tapped my entire repertoire of knowledge.
- Katie Hine: [01:58:54](#) Yes. But it's expensive. Thank you.
- Peter Gerhardt: [01:58:58](#) Welcome.
- Amanda Fishley: [01:58:59](#) We're coming up on two hours and so I know, Katie, you have to go. Thank you so much, Katie.
- Katie Hine: [01:59:04](#) Thank you it was a real honor.
- Amanda Fishley: [01:59:10](#) Oh good. All right, well,
- Peter Gerhardt: [01:59:12](#) it's been a pleasure.
- Erica Holding: [01:59:15](#) And everybody else you need to go, we completely understand the recorded webinar will be made available and panelist as well. If we need to go, you need to go or you be completely understand we are so very thankful to have you here But we'd like to actually go through and finish the, the training. And I'd like to say that, I'm sorry there were running late, but I'm not because it's such wonderful, wonderful material and I know that you guys that are in attendance feel the same ways. So I'm excited to hear what's up. The rest of the presentation looks like and what we're going to discuss.
- Amanda Fishley: [01:59:47](#) Let's move on to our next scenario, which was submitted by Jacqueline. If you want to summarize yours for dr Gerdhart here and then we'll talk about you know, we'll process it and then talk about the question at the bottom. Oh, you're on mute so we can't hear you.
- Jacqueline More...: [02:00:06](#) I do. so mine deal is, you know, he's a six year old that I am having do laundry and he's one of those kiddos who has just mastered out of the BB map. Not mastered out completely, but you know, he can man, he can tact, he knows how to get his requests across. He can listen to directions at school. you know,



he's much more of a compliant kiddo. If he doesn't want to do it, he won't do it. But he definitely understands what the instruction is. and this I see in large part across most of my cases where I'm getting the parents to buy into the fact that they have to now take a more active role in the intervention process. We've done the flash cards, we've done the colors, we've done the basic verbal skills. Now this child is really ready to start generalizing them in a natural environment. getting the parents buy in to really understand that now we're going to be working on what life is like without us. And you know, they kind of look at us and they're like, well, you're here in our home. Can you just work on this with them? And you know, when you're two hours that, then we'll take over. you know, and try to explain like it doesn't, it doesn't work like that.

Peter Gerhardt: [02:01:34](#)

Yeah. I mean, I think it, it has to be, first of all, I think it's great that you're thinking about that with a six year old. I think that's

Peter Gerhardt: [02:01:40](#)

awesome. Quite honestly you know, what am I like catchphrases lately is that, you know, adulthood begins in preschool. You know, so thinking about that stuff now is really critically important. I do think like home programming really needs to be a train the trainer, a model. Like you're saying that you're more training the parents than you weren't trying the kid, you know, so that they can do this, they can take over for your in your, your absence. But I also think what we sometimes don't do is understand the contingencies governing their behavior. And we think just cause we told them to do it and we give them the skills that they're gonna do it. and it may not always work that way. I think it might've been you or somebody else earlier pointed out that, you know, sometimes parents will do things for their kids because they feel that they're being loving and helpful and good parents and, you know, and as opposed to, know, you're supposed to do this on your own.

Peter Gerhardt: [02:02:44](#)

And you know, that, that's a hard contingency to sort of work against, in those situations. but I think what you really, what I would really try and focus on is try to come up with as many sort of quick demonstration of why this is important. you know, I have a, does it try later on in the talk about what typical kids can do from eight, just two to 12. And it's amazing what typical kids can do around the house from two to 12 and then like at 12 we take this kid with autism say, well let's start working on



these things. It's when, now he's by definition 12 years behind his twin brother. So pointing out things like that that, you know, like this is what typical, this is what you should expect him to do. This is what typical kids do.

Peter Gerhardt: [02:03:41](#)

Like it's the prejudice of low expectations things sometimes, you know, it's like, well you know, he doesn't have to do that cause we'll take care of him now. Like I hear that all the time just like, Oh there's have to go to work. Cause we will take care of him. Like that's not the point of work, you know? anybody else have some ideas like is you know, somebody who has more experience with six year olds, but like I would look at what are the contingencies governing parent behavior. That would be my big thing. Try and get them to change their behavior.

Lisa Berkowitz: [02:04:12](#)

I think that it's always important. I think it's always important to remind parents that they're going to get older and you're not always going to be willing or capable or able to do this for your child and don't you want them to be okay when you can't be that one to do it for them. It's a harsh reality, but it's conversation that always needs to be had and you know, we're not always going to be there for our children. It's part of the circle of life. So when you put it that want to them there, they need to face that reality that they're not going to be there all the time forever.

Amanda Fishley: [02:04:48](#)

Right. And I, and I think like setting, you know, working with them and setting goals that are going to work for them. I'm sure you already do this Jacqueline. But it's, I want to work with a parent who said yes he can tie his shoes. He can. So I said, okay great. So you know I had this, I said go ahead and tie your shoes. I, I've never seen a kid tie his shoes as slow. It took him. Oh 20 minutes. I mean, so if it takes you 20 minutes to tie your shoe, that's not a functional skill. It's but working with parents and understand what those things mean. I don't know that they always understand but I as a parent myself, I would understand why they would jump in and just do it. Cause this is going to take you 20 minutes. Oh my goodness. You know we have to go and I think sending smaller goals and you know, maybe start with should be tying or whatever it is that that's appropriate and then building up from there. So letting them see the reinforcement themselves. So if your kid can tie their shoes, how much easier is that on you? You're trying to get up the





door. So trying to pin it into their everyday life as as much as possible and feeling less contrived, I think would be a good strategy to get buy in.

Lisa Berkowitz: [02:05:59](#)

And I'd like to tag team on what you said, what's going to fit their life. A lot of times I'll say to a mom, well, what's on your wishlist? If like if your child can learn to do one thing to make your life easier, what would it be? so that they contact a reinforcement of what their child's doing.

Lisa Berkowitz: [02:06:15](#)

Exactly. Yes. Yeah. I worked with him on this, that I really want him to know how to set the table. We have family over all the time. I want him to set the table. Whereas another family said, you know, they have no X. They don't want him to learn how to set the table. They don't eat at the dining room table. So really it depends on what the family dynamics are and letting them benefit from that and how proud that mom probably was. So that's right. Yes. Thank you for sharing your scenario.

Peter Gerhardt: [02:06:41](#)

And just one quick last thing, but I think it's also important and everybody said this that we recognize that there are stressors just in being a parent, you know, and that we have to understand all of that in that context within every parent you know, is working. And I'll never forget, this was a, this was many years ago, probably like 15 if not more years ago. I was sitting down with a colleague and gave her her going over home programming data that the parent had sent in and we realized that they had taken three different colored pens and did the plus plus plus plus minus minus plus plus like, and I just filled it in and it wasn't, we didn't get mad, we didn't get what we, but we felt bad because we put this poor work. I'm in a position where she felt so bad she had to fake data. Yeah. You know, that she didn't feel it that she could just tell us that wasn't, I didn't get to it. Like, you know, so there has to be this give and take when we do this and understand the situation that every family lives in.

Amanda Fishley: [02:07:50](#)

Right? Yeah, exactly. And you know, we get the opportunity to work in consult with parents internationally and these parents don't have services. They don't have individuals and professionals coming in and showing them these strategies. So they are the therapist and they're, they're the moms and the dads. And it's, it's, it's sad honestly, but you know, these, a lot of



these parents are rock stars and they'll contact me and we, we run through suggestions and, Oh, I just wish I was in Australia so I can help you, but I'm not. So I have to give them the best tools that will go a long way, not just for this one skill, but you know, this tool that I know that you can take with your child longterm, not just right now. So it's, it's important that as BCBA or as a consultant going in, that you're also thinking that way. Even if they do have access to you readily. It's, it's important that you're empowering them in a way that they are doing best by their child.

- Erica Holding: [02:08:47](#) So, okay. I want to make sure that I got this sense. So Carol actually had a strategy that was interesting. So what did she say? I gradually involved parents by teaching them how to assist in one skill or one teaching technique and then gradually increased their participation.
- Amanda Fishley: [02:09:05](#) Yeah, exactly.
- Peter Gerhardt: [02:09:06](#) That's a great thing. Works for everybody.
- Amanda Fishley: [02:09:09](#) [inaudible] long as it works. ABA, right?
- Peter Gerhardt: [02:09:13](#) Yup. Yup.
- Amanda Fishley: [02:09:16](#) Awesome. Thank you for sharing Carol.
- Peter Gerhardt: [02:09:19](#) Okay. So, this, what I want to talk about now sort of briefly as briefly as possible is this is our alley develop sort of a transition plan or what we call a transition profile for the student. we start these at the age of 12. and the idea being that they should look five years down the road. So your son or daughter is 12. What do you want them to be doing when they're 17? The reason we do this is that it's more effective and actually easier to sort of reverse engineer IEP goals than to just build IEP goals based on last year's IEP, which is usually what happens. He was on ed Mark book three, so we're going to go to Edmark book four without any real sense of where this is actually lead it.
- Peter Gerhardt: [02:10:19](#) this is developed by as large a group as wants to participate. Like we've had neighbors, parents, siblings, you know, anybody who's a parent wants to invite to start this process. It really is collaborative personally. I appreciate it when siblings can be



involved and that's primarily because when I want to talk about social carboncy is what social companies or somebody in need. I had the social skill set of a 58 year old man. Like I don't know what 12 year old boys do. I don't know what that picture of like, but their sibling does, you know, their sibling. Like I often make a joke like I think in like five years. Like, what are the diagnostic criteria for autism spectrum disorder is that they either give a high five or they fist bump because we taught every kid on the spectrum to do that.

Peter Gerhardt:

[02:11:17](#)

You know, whether or not it was socially appropriate, culturally normative or whatever. We thought that was the, the thing. So the more people that can be involved, the better. This is what we look at the student, which is the center of all instructional decision making, the parent and parent training and support and goal development, their neighborhood. This is where transition really needs to take place is we may start around the school doing community based stuff, but eventually we got to get to where the kid lives, you know, otherwise we haven't done a whole heck of a lot. And then the extended community, which is everybody around them for awareness, support and acceptance. So with the next, and these are sort of the, the broad, areas of intervention. obviously career, job development based on success of job matches. And I, you know, I think language is important.

Peter Gerhardt:

[02:12:16](#)

So that's why I use the word career because if you do the job sampling process correctly, you should end up with a job that really meets the person's needs, their preferences, their likes, like avoids their dislike. So, it should be something along those lines. what skills you need to be able to manage your home life would be the next area. Tell you the requirements of the daily living. leisure, access to preferred activities designed to promote happiness. I will be brutally honest here. I think this is one of the most challenging areas, in which I work with older individuals because they often get to me with play skill that nobody's really thought to sort of develop more complex leisure skills as they get older. So they still watch Barney and play UNO, and you know, and UNO isn't even a leisure skill, it's just something they were taught to do.

Peter Gerhardt:

[02:13:19](#)

And so they do it like I think it's a huge issue that's in need of significant research. community being an active member of



their social community. a lot of our families, for example, want their kids to really stay in religious services. So we work closely with communities of faith, to develop the ability to participate in different services. one of the things just, you know, we we'd like to do is, is we, we do it backwards now where we'll work with the community of faith to say, you know, this child is going to come in during the last 10 minutes of the service and so leave when their benediction is given and everybody else starts leaving. And then we'll go to 15 minutes and then we'll go to 20. And so we fail to backwards across it as opposed to, I say a lot of times people start at the beginning and trying to sort of form a chain, but I think it's better. It just lends itself much more to backwards chaining cause you have a very discrete end of the chain to do this. and then of course, school. What is all the education, what are on educational program goals that needed to support all of this? So.

Speaker 4: [02:14:32](#)

can I ask you a question about leisure?

Peter Gerhardt: [02:14:37](#)

Yeah.

Amanda Fishley: [02:14:38](#)

Yes. Okay. So this is, I mean, as you mentioned, it's a really challenging area. And when I was working with the kids in the school, even in the mental health agency at this age, I found this to be the trickiest part. And I got a lot of questions, you know, both from parents, staff like about appropriate leisure skills for kids that are in their young teens or even you know, young adults. And it's really tricky because as you mentioned, you know, you get kids that are still very interested in Sesame street and they want to, you know, interact with what we consider to be younger, maybe childish type things. And it's a very tricky situation. And you know, you have staff that may teach a leisure skill because it seems like, Oh yeah, you know, they might be doing this in a group home or they might be doing this, might be a good idea to teach them how to play UNO or more or card games because they might have access to that in their natural environment. But how do you go about selecting this? And I I worked with a grad student that was, through Western Michigan university that was trying to directly teach leisure skills and hopes that they would become preferences later on. But do you have any suggestions on really how to focus on this area and what, how you teach it, how you go about choosing them?



- Peter Gerhardt: [02:15:59](#) Well, I mean, the short answer is no, but let me explain that cause we do have some things that we're doing. first I think the big challenge is that the definition of a leisure skill we've defined it as sort of looks like leisure as opposed to acts like functions as leisure. and leisure by definition is the ultimate choice activity. Like it actually requires choice in terms of activity, location, duration, time, partners and access. So it's why don't you do, when you do it, who are you doing it with? How long you do it, where are you doing? Like all of these things. Example I use is I love to read in my spare time, but I love to read when I want to read what I want to read for as long as I want to read it. Where do I want to read it?
- Peter Gerhardt: [02:16:44](#) Take away those to no longer leisure scale. So that's why I think it's so complex when we're talking about this, we're developing a whole protocol of what we're calling leisure sampling and we're trying to come up with different, you know, there, there's a couple of lists out there of, you know, different leisure activities and we based upon individual preferences and likes. And then we'll, we try different leisure activities that may or may not function those leisure activities. we use an arbitrary five time rule, which this is just my made this up. This is my own rule, is that if the first time we take him, there's a thing called foot golf for example, which is, there's 200 and something golf courses in the country now that have foot golf courses with them, but it's a soccer ball. So you kick it and then there's a bigger hole that has to go in and it's really great with families and like this kind of stuff.
- Peter Gerhardt: [02:17:51](#) So, but if we go five times to flip golf, first time he hit me seven times and the fifth time he was hitting me seven times. It's not leisure. Like it's never going to be is if the first time he hit me five times in the fifth time, he hit three one time, I may go to 10 times to see. Cause the first time you try something new is on. It's hard, you know? So we may do that. So we sampled different things. the second thing is I think if we sort of look at, you know, distributing our responses in direct proportion to the reinforcement inherent upon those responses, what are the things that he does most? And if it takes her to stereo, they ought to be out of the mix. How do we build upon something that he would do if left independent on his own time?



- Peter Gerhardt: [02:18:41](#) Like, is there something that we can build from there?, I often talk about, and I, and I am very serious about this. one of my leisure skills really is doing the laundry. Like I really enjoyed doing the laundry. Now it's a low effort task. I put the laundry in, I watch TV, I take it out, I put in the dryer, I watched TV I like it's, especially during football season, it's great, it's awesome. And then at the end I have a finished product. And I think part of my reason I call it a leisure skill is nothing else in my life has a finished product. All of these things are ongoing. Like I am never ever done professionally with what I do. There's always a next step. There's always a, so on this one little thing in my life, I actually complete a task and it's low effort and I feel good and it relaxes me and it bothers me if I don't get to do the laundry on a Sunday, you know, look for some things like that.
- Peter Gerhardt: [02:19:44](#) Is there something that he really likes? I will also tell you at the end of the day, last year, our graduate, works independently at at the campus center at Montclair state university. Like his job coaches, his boss like is like nobody's there with them. On his break he watches Thomas the tank on his Walkman cause you know the old I am on his iPhone but he watches him like with earphones on and it's just on a little screen. So it's cause it works for him. Like I can't ethically take it away just because I think it's not age inappropriate. I'm a comic book geek, who am I to argue, you know, but I, we spend a lot of time trying to find other things that he might like instead of that. But you know what my idea, like if someone gave me \$2 million to do a study, I would love to actually do an early intervention study where you get two groups, you know, matched kids on the spectrum. A really good AIB I this kid group one, all the kids in group. I need to do the typical sort of play school Barney, you know, a sesame street, all that kind of stuff.
- Peter Gerhardt: [02:21:05](#) These kids, you know, the music they listened to was Coldplay and Zeppelin and all that stuff is reinforcing and like the videos they watch are like, you know, regular like MTV videos and this kind of stuff as opposed to, and my bet is when these kids are 12 the second group is going to have a better leader scale repertoire then this first group. Yeah. Because I think we often really good teaching play skills to little kids up to the age of like six and then it stops.
- Amanda Fishley: [02:21:38](#) Right? Yeah.



- Peter Gerhardt: [02:21:39](#) So that was a very long answer.
- Amanda Fishley: [02:21:42](#) No, thank you. But you're right though, I mean how, how you play in their preferences and consider habilitation and you know how people are going to interact with them and access to reinforcement is really, it's an a consideration and it's a very complex question, but I appreciate you answering it.
- Peter Gerhardt: [02:21:59](#) Yeah. The other thing I, and I pointed this out yesterday, what's nice is that the leisure skills of typical young adults are regressing to like elementary school levels. And what I mean by that is almost any relatively big city. There's an adult kickball league now. All my guys can play kickball, you know, so they can go do that. Go to Dave and busters, Dave and busters on one wall of Dave and busters is 88 foot by eight foot connect for them. So now maybe if you're going to play connect four but you never liked before, but now you're playing it with a hamburger and a drink and you're playing connect four with someone like maybe now that becomes a much more naturally occurring. The leisure skill. Yeah, but it's because I think that typical Kip did, people did when they were young, they wanted to sort of be live so that they're becoming normative. So we're able to access some of those things. Yeah.
- Amanda Fishley: [02:23:00](#) Yeah. I like it.
- Peter Gerhardt: [02:23:01](#) I want it goes on.
- Amanda Fishley: [02:23:03](#) I'll, I'll let you move on here.
- Peter Gerhardt: [02:23:10](#) Yeah. Okay. So before we would actually get to this part there, we would have a sort of transition statement, like an overall goal, like in five years, where is this person going to be? And we were looking along those five components, you know, career, home, community, leisure, and what are our expectations? Now again, I emphasize that these are best guesses. These are shots in the dark. These are rarely where we want to go. They'll be, can predict the future. But then based upon that, we sit down and say, okay, that's where we think he's going to be in five years. What do we need to do today? What do we need to start working on? So for this young individual, this one of the skills that he would need to be able to follow his iPhone or his iPad



for schedules, the challenge is attention to the appropriate stimuli.

Peter Gerhardt: [02:24:11](#)

Maybe a challenge, is one of those kids that, you know, he'll switch past his schedule to go play the big video game on his phone, you know, so actually attending to his schedule, maybe. So recommendations may be considered a couple of simple keeping appointments program for his iPad. transition, current low tech schedule to more self management schedule. I'm a big fan of self buyers right into this high tech sketch drilling program using the iPad. So these are all sort of just these brainstorming. My dogs just returned from a walk, so they're running around. and we go through it and each one of these, but again, it's done as a group. You know, we really sit down and say like, is this what we have to do now? if we go to the next one.

Peter Gerhardt: [02:25:07](#)

Yeah. So given their, our transition statement, they, we're home for an case. It really is the next six months because he has to make his own lunch at home. and school, well, the challenge is being able to identify highly preferred simple lunches, you know, but what does he want to make? so we need to identify one to three simple lunches, develop a TA. I'm using backward chain and target one meal at a time as that meal is mastered, generalized to home. so on and so forth. So then we, we go through this whole process, to identify these individual goals, what the challenges are going to be and how do we help solve that challenge. go to the next one.

Peter Gerhardt: [02:25:55](#)

See now here's this how this is a young man who likes flipping through magazines, but he liked this flipping through kind of more kitty magazines type thing, one of the things that I did immediately was I have a whole, I have like 8,000 comic books, not all of which are worth money. And so I brought in about 50 comic books and now he's Leafs through comic books, which at least is somewhat more age appropriate than [inaudible] magazine. So we just transitioned one of the parts out of it. But we also thought since he likes photos, maybe we could try doing something as complex as teaching how to Photoshop, like taking photos in, playing with photos on the computer and developing his own photos. You know, no idea. But we do think it would be next next year. Probably the hardest one is, is a community. But





we feel what we try to do is tie everything together into bigger goals.

Peter Gerhardt: [02:27:01](#)

So if he's going to go shopping, he should go shopping for the ingredients he needs to make the lunches that we want to teach him to make and he should go out shopping, buy the ingredients, come back and make the lunch. It shouldn't be go out, buy 20 things, four of what you need to make the lunch and put all that stuff away. And then the next day make the lunches like we wanted develop scenarios where there's as naturally occurring a reinforcer as possible and tying the different parts of the skills together so that it works overall to promote independence and competence. I just didn't fill it like cause the recommendations or see all the previous sessions. So the school was going to have a lot of responsibilities on this, but I think the more most important side, here's the next one.

Peter Gerhardt: [02:28:03](#)

When we get all of these done, we then there are three additional slides that are, what are the school's responsibility over the next six months? [inaudible] in the next six months. And also what is the community's responsibility for this next six months? And I explained that in a second. Okay. So in this case, and this is again, if we're looking at a 12 year old, we would want to review it every six months for the next two years. We also can change it anytime based upon data. But in terms of career, it's the family responsibility to coordinate with the school on a reasonable independent toting protocol. It's going to be hard to get him a job. If he's not completely violent in nature, that's going to be a problem. We also want to coordinate that with Patrick. We'll get preference assessments. We identified new reinforcers, at home they should identify some, but lunches provides systematic instruction, continue working at health and versus exercise and bike riding.

Peter Gerhardt: [02:29:02](#)

Collect data on conditions impacting challenging behavior for leisure. He does a lot at home. He swims. he goes to, he does yoga, he does things like that, but he's also not good when just left alone. There's a chance that if he's just left alone, he may have a challenging behavior, may engage in challenging behavior. So maybe finding iPad games or different apps that are going to be more engaging. So that being left alone quarter going on a break is not as a of event isn't wiping. This was an individual who go to his church service. And then there's also



the school, like the thing with the friends with the parents of the school is going to be, I mentioned that there's one for the school. What the school respond to is going to be with the parents, but also the community. The reason that we have a community part is two things.

Peter Gerhardt:

[02:29:51](#)

One, if we're talking about employment, employment is the only thing we do that requires another person to say yes. If I want to teach them to go to Starbucks, I can go to Starbucks. If I want to teach them to go ride the go-karts at the Gogo, I can do that. Like there's, nobody can tell me, but I can't get them at the gym. I'm training unless an employer says, yeah, so I need to look at what behavior I need to support in that aspect. The other part of it is more and more we're looking at this concept, not so much of independent but interdependent. So, for example, a different student, you know, his father every weekend over the last few years took him to Starbucks and finally we convinced the father to like just let him go to Starbucks myself. I've just let him go and see what he does and what was, what we expected happened because everybody at Starbucks picked up the Slack from the father.

Peter Gerhardt:

[02:30:53](#)

They were the ones you said of made choice did get in line that he waited that he like, because it was part of that community, you know, it was, but that interdependence, he like, they picked up the Slack and that's really our biggest goal is to establish that relationship with the members of your immediate social community to support you in ways that promote what looks independence, what really is interdependence. I hope that makes sense. It does.

Amanda Fishley:

[02:31:23](#)

You feel like that's a norm or do you think in that situation it's more of an outlier? I'm just curious what your experience has been with working.

Peter Gerhardt:

[02:31:31](#)

Actually I think it's the norm. I think it's, I really think, if you look at the entirety of the typical community out there, I think 25% of the people out there really want to help us and are good at it. Yeah.

Peter Gerhardt:

[02:31:45](#)

think 50% want to help us but are really nervous. So we have to sort of look at shaping and support them. Other 25% are untrainable and I just avoid them. You know, I don't have the



time and inclination to try and change their behavior. So I just did Wyndham. So that still leaves me 75% of the population. And most people, you know, particularly my area of the country, autism is the normal defense. First. Autism programs in New Jersey were in the 70s. Like it's a known quantity. It's not that big a deal. As a matter of fact, what's kind of interesting, a little bit of a aggression or, and I apologize. When I was working in New York city, which is great cause you can literally go to the grocery store three times in one day, cause you don't need a car, you don't need a van, you don't, even just walk down the block and you can be back in the grocery store.

- Peter Gerhardt: [02:32:40](#) We did a social validity study where we asked the customers what they thought we needed to teach our students to be really included at the grocery store to be part of the community to do it. Well 90% of the respondents are the most important thing for them to learn was to pay quickly after the cashier said that it's 1450. They didn't care if they rocked. They didn't care if they talk to themselves. They don't care if they left, but if they're really slow paying, you're holding up the line. It affects them. Yes. So it affects them. So that became sort of like, like new Yorkers understand autism but they don't accept in competence. So the thing we did was just we changed our task and analysis to after you put your stuff on a conveyor belt, then you took out your money or your credit card or you didn't wait till you were told so you can pay right away. And by doing that now all of a sudden we've lowered any barriers to inclusion that the community may have had. You know, cause they're like, Oh, I'm not that cause autism thing is going to slow me down. I'm going to get back to him. Like, cause now he's zipping through that checkout line. Cause we asked them what was an important skill, not just what we thought was the important skill. Right. I hope that makes sense.
- Amanda Fishley: [02:34:01](#) So yeah, it makes perfect sense.
- Peter Gerhardt: [02:34:02](#) Great. Okay. Okay. All right, cool. What's next?
- Amanda Fishley: [02:34:10](#) Lisa do you want to go ahead and ask your transition question. You're on mute. Hold on just a sec.
- Lisa Berkowitz: [02:34:22](#) okay, got it. Okay. So mine was just about with programming, executing both individual and group, the need to satisfy goals



for both the IEP, the district, the school requirements. and how do you go about doing it to, meet everybody's needs, the family, the learner. And how do you usually go about collecting data? How to find everybody?

Peter Gerhardt: [02:34:51](#)

You guys ask hard questions. first of all, I think it's an incredibly important goal and one that we are continually refining how we implement it at the Epic school. it's, I think sometimes changing the behavior of typical people is harder than changing the behavior of individuals on the spectrum and getting staff to acquire the new skills for working in a dyad or a triad. Y'all taking data,

Amanda Fishley: [02:35:29](#)

know dyads teaching and dyads, nobody wants to do that one on one. And that's not happening anymore.

Peter Gerhardt: [02:35:40](#)

Right? Everybody wants to be in a one on one. Everybody, you know. And we initially started to do dyad stuff because if a staff called out sick, everybody would lose their mind, you know, cause somebody had to die at and that's not fair to my students. So we really focused on, you know, getting people more competent in dyads. but there still was this sort of tendency to, I'm gonna work with student A while student B does a puzzle and then I'm going to work with student B while student A does do some magazine and that's not dyad instruction. That's not grouping instruction. Yeah. So we work really hard with, you know, using hidden prompts so that like there'll be an instructor in the front working with two kids or three kids, two other staff people are behind so that they can prompt from behind, not to the instructor just teaches the lesson.

Peter Gerhardt: [02:36:31](#)

can I tell you we've gotten anything close to what I would consider proficiency or fluency. Now we are working on it, every single day. And you know, tomorrow starts our annual August training. And a big part of it is going back to dyads and triads and how do we actually develop those skill competencies, let alone in larger groups. And we do have, you know, there's a pretty good body of research on group instruction in ADA, you know, you know, the, what is, it'll come to me, nevermind. But there's, there's a really large body research. So, I think for me, my sorry, catchphrase I guess is shaping works with everybody that I really have to look at sort of changing behavior over a



specific amount of time and not just expecting people to be able to do this. and just like I often say with my clients who are very high verbal, they have this say don't do phenomena that you say, what do you do if a stranger comes up to you and watch your wallet?

Peter Gerhardt:

[02:37:47](#)

They tell you. But then a stranger goes up to remark Mr. Wall and they don't do it cause they have no behavioral practice doing it. They just have the vocal verbal response. That's all. All my staff have the vocal verbal response about how to do diet instruction. They don't have the behavioral response about how to do it. And one of the best things that happened to me when I started in the field back in 1988 at the Douglas development disability center is I was trained harder to work with adolescents with autism, with really challenging behavior in a three to one and, and collect data. If you go work in a freedom, the one you can work in a 10 to one and if you go work in a three to one you go work in a one to one. But if you could just work in a one-to-one, you cannot do any of that. So, you know, the second part is then we just get very specific about what data are we collecting, right. You know, what really are we going to take first trial data? Are we getting extra data? Or like we may look at different data collection scenarios so that we can actually make it as easy as possible so that we get the most accurate data based upon the situation. But, as far as I go, it is a work in progress, how I get people to do it better. But that's what we're trying to do.

Lisa Berkowitz:

[02:39:01](#)

We're constantly changing the way we're taking data. Like one year we're doing probe data and then I decided for compliance. I put together like 15 things that I felt that if a child has mastered then you know they're under good control to be in a less restrictive setting and then I realized, you know what, that's not really working so this time we're going to actually use the whole day as the trial. How are they able to maintain an entire day without engaging this behavior? And then I'm constantly changing how I'm doing things and then I feel like I'm always retraining because it doesn't always work. Like it's constantly like troubleshooting.

Peter Gerhardt:

[02:39:39](#)

I think that's what's going to happen if you're thinking like a behavior analyst because you, you try your first strategy with your data question and it didn't give you the information you wanted, like you're obligated to then change. And because we



go by the data, we live and die by the data, you know, if it didn't work it didn't work and we have to try something else and whether there is going to be latency or you know probe data or whatever like rate, you know, fluency data like we're going to have to look at, it's going to change as a function of what the needs. So I think, I don't think that you can avoid that quite honestly. Erica you have a thought?

Erica Holding: [02:40:20](#)

No I was just going, I was just going back and thinking about when I was in classroom instruction and about we, which now you know we're starting to use more technology to collect data which just helps them a five things. But we used to have like group data sheets where we'd have all the kids down like Wister down on one side and then if we were working on math skills we'd have at the top all the different skills that they were working on on one sheet so that we can toggle back and forth. Did they get multiple data points for different kids and they could be working at different skill levels, not on the same skill, maybe working at whatever scale they were at. But you know, it took, we had to become fluent with their schooling, knowing where they were with their programs. We had to flip back and forth, you know, pretty quickly between different skills. And so I'm looking forward to what technology can do for us to help us with, with collecting our data more efficiently.

Peter Gerhardt: [02:41:18](#)

Yeah, I think so too.

Amanda Fishley: [02:41:21](#)

That's great. Okay.

Peter Gerhardt: [02:41:22](#)

Any, any suggestions from the community up there? so I think one of the things that we're, we're focusing on is like, so what are, what are essential skills now the, the problem is I have thousands upon thousands of skills, you know, but, and still there are more skills that I don't have then, then I do have like, so how do we figure out what to teach? Like what are the important things that are really going to be worth, you know, providing the time, effort, expertise, and money to teach this kid. What's, where's the value added for doing that? So next [inaudible]

Amanda Fishley: [02:42:06](#)

okay, hold on one backwards here. Alright. Okay. So we've talked about this before. You know, throughout our presentation is taking a functional curriculum versus an



academic curriculum and you know, is there a time that you switch over or you know, making sure that what we're teaching is valuable, whether it is considered to be a functional curriculum or an academic curriculum. And I think dr Gerhardt says this really well, but it's the application of what we're teaching, not necessarily which category it falls into, but when you pick up literature, a lot of times it, it places that you positions as a dichotomy. So it's functional curriculum versus an academic curriculum as if they couldn't exist together. And I think, you know, the research I have done really suggest that they should exist together on a continuum and in tandem. And a really interesting article they looked at whether or not a student received a functional curriculum, quote unquote, was largely dependent on their disability status. So if the had a moderate to severe intellectual disability, they were more likely to get access to functional curriculums versus the academic curriculums and things such as their location, their school population, their gender, income, ethnicity. We're not influences in those decisions. So that may not be as a surprise to many people, but I, I think, you know, as we keep that in mind that we don't need to take those two and put them as a dicot. I mean if they can and they should exist together.

Amanda Fishley: [02:43:44](#)

All right. And this is your definition of an essential skill.

Peter Gerhardt: [02:43:49](#)

Yeah, this is just though our working definition, so it's going to, you know, it's under development and changing all the time, but especially when it comes to transitioning, that we look at it as essential skill is any skill that we're acquired and able to independently complete a variety of relevant tasks and engage in desired activities and be everyone to terms. That's sort of like a behavioral cusp, but not completely. but going with what Amanda was just saying, like, reading is an academic test, but it has great functional applications. You know if you can read like you can do a whole bunch of stuff. I was at Kentucky Arbor and at one point like I will have to go to the men's room and there was a sign that said met with an arrow and then further down with her sign. I said it this way with an arrow and then there was the manager and I came back and I, during my talk I said, you know what?

Peter Gerhardt: [02:44:45](#)

I've followed the arrows. I said, but if I see one in the spectrum you would say Peter requires two written prompts to be able to



access the men's room. Well in the community when the fact of the matter is I just applied my skills to read the directions to know where they are. So that's the application of the skill. Any skill that one use with sufficient frequency? Do you mean the individuals repertoire? So it's something you have to use often enough. Now the only exception are safety skills, which I think we'll talk about in another, in another talk, which ideally are low response frequency scales offer. You're not using your CT skills 10 times a day. And then lastly, and it's going to can be required within a reasonable timeframe because I'm time bound, I am talking about no matter what, I have six hours in a day, you know, toward a 44 days a year and I have X number of years left in this.

Peter Gerhardt: [02:45:34](#)

Like I can actually come up with an equation to say how many hours I have left to teach all of these skills and I can break it down. And if you haven't done it, you should try it because it's a really scary process when you think about the limited amount of time you really have left to do this. Like I said, this isn't the end all be all. It should one way that we've tried to figure out what's good or not. But for us it seems to be working right now, but it's still very much in draft form. So, and this is where the application of that critique area, these are actual IEP objectives from a 19 year olds IEP that I was asked to review from a good program. I think good reputation. and one of the goals in the IEP is when is your birthday?

Peter Gerhardt: [02:46:28](#)

Now, first of all, that's an incredibly low frequency scale. Like, like maybe you get asked once a year, maybe twice. And the fact of the matter is if somebody is asking you, they don't know the answer, you can probably lie and get away with it. Like you don't really even have to be accurate. Now yes, if you're filling out a form or something, but then that's a different skill. You know, nobody's stating when you have to fill it in on a form, that's a very different skill. so the importance of that, I think it's pretty a zero 99 I wouldn't bother with that. where do you live? Well, that's also a pretty frequent scale, but you know, it's actually pretty important to be able to report where you live. One of the things that I pointed out is that if you ask most typical people where they live, they will tell you the city, they don't tell you the address.





- Peter Gerhardt: [02:47:22](#) So unless they expect his response to me, the city, he's not going to be asked that. They're going to be asked like, what's your address? Okay. If he ever gets lost. So that should be the more I'm wiping after a bowel movement. This is one of my pet peeves. Like how did they get to be 19? It's still all not have this in his repertoire. Um, um, but that's besides the point. Um, now here's where, like I said, some professional decision making comes in, you know, one was make a meal, the recipe and one who's making meals, meal, microwave. Okay. Given time limits. I probably over the course of one IEP year could teach this young man to independently, truly independently make one meal following a recipe during the same time period. I could probably teach him to make 10 healthy microwaveable meals because today there are really good as Amy's vegetarian stuff, there's, you know, you know, not everything is hot pockets anymore so we can actually find desirable.
- Peter Gerhardt: [02:48:27](#) so where do I want to put my resources? Do I want to put it so that he follows a recipe? On the assumption that dad's gonna work as sort of, cause I cut that I'm going to go to follow directions for anything. I don't know, probably not for me. I'm going to look at mega meal or microwave and you know, quite honestly we're going to sample what meals he likes. We're going to try some different meals. We're also going to try and, given the cognitive challenges presented by this young man, I'm probably would try and find seven meal was that all are done in the same amount of time. So I don't have to worry about him learning to identify on the package that it's, you know, seven minutes at high. So every time he goes in refrigerator picks what he wants, but today and he just hits the one button that's a preset and now he cooks his meal.
- Peter Gerhardt: [02:49:20](#) so that goes to, I modified it from Paul Wayman, which is if you can teach the skill, teach it. If he can't teach, just go that fit and if you can't teach us, if you can't adapt it, figure out the what threw out some way around it. So by just using meals that are all cooked at the same time, like I've taught him to innovate and make lunch without unnecessary skill, which is reading how long you supposed to cook it because I figured out a way around it. Yeah. We sometimes get, so that's how this essential skill thing gets applied. Looking at IEP goals. So



- Erica Holding: [02:49:54](#) also Peter was essential skills scope, the goals to like when I think about the client I talked about earlier, I actually might make that make a recipes one, a two for him because I know he loves cooking and I love looking at cookbooks. So I might change that importance level. His preferences, right? Yeah.
- Peter Gerhardt: [02:50:14](#) Yup, yup, yup. Absolutely. Now we have one student who's, one of his favorite things to do is allegiance go was watching cooking shows. He loved watching cooking shows, didn't translate into cooking. He liked watching cooking shows. So that's, I think that's like most of the population. However they like watching cooking shows but don't then cook this up. Basic. So, I mentioned before Pat McGreevy's pencils for living in this. This is his, these are his, essential eight which are making requests. Okay. Waiting after making requests, which is a very important skill except the removals to making transitions, sharing and taking turns. exempting removals I think is a big one. Cause I a lot of times see kids who are denied access to a highly preferred stimulate, whether it's like a certain music thing or, because when you stop it then they have a quote unquote meltdown.
- Peter Gerhardt: [02:51:09](#) So they eliminate the problem by just not giving them access to it, which I think is actually borderline ethical because you have something that's so valuable to the student that if you take it away, they actually, I would be in an episode and if I want to sorta get overly cognitive, I think he's having a real episode because he's thinking I'm never going to get it back and all you've done now was reinforced that perception and that he's never going to get it back. So teaching kids who accept removals and completing 10 consecutive brief previously quite a task, I think that's a really good Golson for 10. Accepting no as opposed to later or maybe like an actual no is important skill. We also work with our kids telling us now cause that's an important safety skill for them following directions related to health and safety, completing daily living skills. We call it related health and safety and then tolerating situations really to health and safety. So I think those are all good. You know, I think underneath them they were really broad categories, but I think those are very good, you know, skill competencies. We can work on this.
- Karen Chung: [02:52:17](#) Hey Peter,



- Karen Chung: [02:52:19](#) I want to interrupt you for that because I know that Lisa has to go and so Lisa, thank you so much for participating. It was just, you guys really add a lot to the value of the training that people are taken away. So I know that you have to go around.
- Peter Gerhardt: [02:52:40](#) Lisa, I really appreciate it. Erica, you going to, are you saying
- Erica Holding: [02:52:43](#) no, I'm still here.
- Peter Gerhardt: [02:52:45](#) Okay. Okay, good. Thank you Lisa. but this was sort of just my simple one. This is, I just, this is Gretchen Rubin. She's not a behavior analyst. She's not special educators. She's not a psychologist, she's not a specialized pathologist. She's an author. her most famous book is called the happiness project or came out in 2009. but what you do every day matters more than what you do once in a while. And the simplest example of this is when we do these five year meetings, these transition planning meetings, the question I often find myself asking parents, does your son or daughter get up on alarm clock? And almost universally they say no. And I say, well, do you get up my alarm clock? And they say, of course I do. And I'm like, well why shouldn't they? Well, I get them up.
- Peter Gerhardt: [02:53:37](#) I'm like, but they can be independent. Well he doesn't like loud noises. Like that's the definition of an alarm clock. Like that's why we like simple, simple. And I also point out that if he or she learns to, and if I get up by an alarm clock, that's just safety skill because it also means that no page has to go into their bedroom in the future to wake them up. That's really pretty cool. So it's a simple thing. So we ask ourselves this question, we can really identify a lot of those skills that are going to be important over the long term. She's gonna start charging me for using this at some point.
- Erica Holding: [02:54:12](#) I think too, like people underestimate what an important skill the alarm clock is. I mean I've, I've worked with young adults whose parents do exactly what you just said and literally like I can understand the parents because they, they took six months to help their young adult find a job and then he loses a job because he's always made to work. So they've put themselves in a behavior chain and if they, they're like if I take myself out of the chain, I'm going to have to look for another job for him and it's going to take six months. And it's just the response that they



have to have is so difficult for them to remove themselves that I've got point to that change cause it's such a bigger cost at that point in their lives. Working on that skill early on that it becomes so much harder to, to, to deal with when they grow up. Right.

Jacqueline More...:

[02:55:04](#)

And the notion of adaptive behavior, talking to parents about, you know, they'll, cause I work with some younger kids and some like my oldest client is maybe 13 or so. so, you know, when they're younger, a lot of stuff they do is maybe cute, but they're gonna grow up and you know, kids will grow separate, you know, this one throw his stuffed animal or you know, they'll start banging the table and the parent will give in. And I see what would happen if I went to Starbucks and they said, I'm sorry, we're out of soy milk. And I started banging on the table or I started screaming, you know, what's appropriate for you as a parent to do versus what's, you know, we can't let them think that their behavior is appropriate just because they have this condition. Society itself is not, it's not going to be so forgiving. and it's not, it's not healthy. It's not healthy. and I'll try to put it in that perspective too of, you know, what, how do we ask for things and how do you know, just having a kid scream to the ethers, like I want a cookie, we can't do that ourselves. And you know, letting the kid do that when he's five, six, it's only going to stick to when he's 15, 16.

Peter Gerhardt:

[02:56:30](#)

Yup. 100%. And you know, adaptive behavior is, is, you know, this is billiards definition. So, so for all the BCBA is out there, like, you know, one of the Holy Trinity, who was a great guy, who is what I was thinking before too, has done a lot of research on classroom instruction. So on group instruction. So, really guys, that'd be everything you do during a day and it's not academic, it's that simple. So as he says that to be able to those skills or abilities that enabled me to stand as a personal independence and to be expected of his or her age or social group. You're first a typical performance, but it also changes according to persons age, cultural expectations in divine mental events. So it's a, it's a constantly changing set of skills that we have when typical people, when you first move in with your, your boyfriend or girlfriend and you get mad like your your adaptive behavior skill set changes dramatically based upon that particular change. If you're a parent and you have a baby,



your adaptive skillset changes dramatically based upon that. Right? Erica changes dramatically. So it really is

Speaker 17: [02:57:42](#)

[inaudible]

Peter Gerhardt: [02:57:43](#)

what it's, it is the key concept to what we all do on a day to day basis. I often will ask parents to start us on these five year, like five year meetings. Like if your son or daughter's left alone for 24 hours, what would they do? Would they make a sandwich where they eat or they take a shower when they take their meds or they get out of bed? What would they do? Right. And universities like versus, I don't know. And it's like, I don't want to think about it. I was like, that's the problem. That's the is like he has none of the skills necessary if you're not in the picture. So that's what would have to be in you know, 2012 review by Mattson and colleagues. did identify that there are a lot of interventions to teach adaptive behavior skills and that there were behavioral interventions wasn't just good for our field.

Peter Gerhardt: [02:58:40](#)

So, this is why I often will, instead of functional, I tend to use the term applied, so there are applied skills as opposed to functional skills cause functional over the past 10, 15, 20 years. It's taken out sort of a negative connotation like, Oh, it's not academics you're giving up on my kid, like you're done. I mean down the curriculum. Like it's this thing. and then I point out, you know, when I was working in New York city, do you know how difficult it is to teach kids with classic autism how to safely cross the streets in New York city? Like that is harder than inferential calculus. That is, I am not making the curriculum dumber or I am making it harder if we're teaching this. And in your city, you are never more than 50 feet from a corner. So you better learn how to safely cross the street.

Peter Gerhardt: [02:59:41](#)

Like it's an essential skill. Right? So, but that's why we underestimate, and I, I have a personal ADL is we often talk about ADL activities of daily living. they're, they're okay, they're great. It's a good term, but they really just chores. You know, we, we want to think of them as the adaptability. It's like making your bed, doing your lawn laundry, you know, taking out the garbage, their chores. That's great. We often do drawers, but adaptive behaviors is a much bigger thing than that. So ADL are really like just chores. they've involved some degree of complex decision making skills and some simple decision



making skills. and they may be preferred skills, but also not, where we were talking about this presentation before, one of the things I pointed out is I think one of the hardest skills to teach a lot of the people I work with is brushing your teeth adequately because it is a socially reinforced behavior. It is high effort, it's intrusive. And the big social payoff is that you don't have bad breath, not depth, dental hygiene. You don't have cavity. That's a longterm reinforcer, the initial. But if you're not concerned with social interaction, if you don't want to talk to people, if you have, there's built in naturally occurring reinforcement for that particular skill. So it's very hard and it makes very little sense to the student why I'm doing this. Right. And so like I said, they not always high referred skills. But then again some more so,

Peter Gerhardt:

[03:01:20](#)

but this is the chart that I told you about. I said before, Jacqueline, this is a choice that, that ADL is a typical kids can do. So from like two to four kids can help dust the napkins on the table. They can help do almost everything. You know that mom or dad has done. They help. They like to help two to four year olds, four to seven they can set or helps at the table or at least their place setting. They can put away their own toys, they can help make bed, they can help with dishes in the dishwasher. So there's don't helping with a lot of stuff. Eight to 10 year olds are they, they start to get really independent and stuff. They can make their bed, they concern their table, they can dust vacuum, they can do a lot, 11, 12. They can do everything around the house every whether or not they do it.

Peter Gerhardt:

[03:02:01](#)

There's another story that they can do everything around the house. Okay. And if we then wait till the kid on the spectrum is 12 to say, now we're going to start working on this stuff. Not only is he 12 years behind this up here, but we also are now unlearning 12 years of not doing a mom, always doing this. And dad always doing that. So where if we looked at it from a much more sort of systematic perspective and started early on, I think we would have much better outcomes with. It's a subset of skills

Speaker 2:

[03:02:37](#)

[inaudible]

Peter Gerhardt:

[03:02:48](#)

now these are my sort of with input from a couple of people at the Epic school. Joanne Emer, Angela Rodriguez, a couple other people, six skills that I just think should be mastered by the age



of 10. independent toileting at home and school. And by independent, I mean they go in, close the door, do their stuff and come out like independent dressing, same thing, independent showering. Now I get that like six year old, 10 year olds don't shower, but trying to teach onto a 15 year old who hasn't had the shower for the 14 years before, that is much more difficult than did you get to a six year old? So, independent eating, using utensils, you know, I'd always start the parents stop cutting up his food like, like he can actually use the utensils, basic functional communication. It really just, I continued to meet adults who have no functional communication system because they weren't taught well where they were taught.

Peter Gerhardt:

[03:03:49](#)

When that's not functional for, they have their PECS book, but they always leave it behind because it's not really their voice. It's just, you know, and, and family members of skills participating in or cleaning simple household chores but also going on a vacation with their parents, going shopping with the parents. So doing all those sorts of things. six skills for its instruction should be started before the age of 10 skill acquisition and diet to try it. That's what we were talking about before. acting on basic safety discriminations. This is a very complex topic that I will, I will hopefully get to go another time. So the challenge with safety discriminations is that it is error based learning where we are very much error or less learning. Like you only learn safety skills by making mistakes. So if you,

Peter Gerhardt:

[03:04:39](#)

we started by talking about this because we, we realized that we couldn't teach sort of some sexual safety skills to a 19 year old woman if she had never learned not to touch the hot stove. Like if there was no basic understanding of danger at risk, I tried to teach complex was really going to be difficult. the application of academic skills self-management, which I think is a really as almost an essential skills. You get acquisition of new skills outside of the classroom and something that we don't often look at. but problem solving and variable responding. Now there's a body of literature and bribery responding. But, most programs, programs as most schools programs are set up so that there's one game answered to an instruction when world doesn't really work that way. In many cases there are multiple correct answers to an instruction and there's different ways that



you can start. So starting working on problem solving, over responding I think is really critically important at that age. Next

- Speaker 2: [03:05:59](#) [inaudible]
- Peter Gerhardt: [03:05:59](#) is this me again?
- Amanda Fishley: [03:06:01](#) Yeah, I think that kind of ties back everything that you just said is, you know, getting started earlier that there's no sense in waiting till they're 12 to start teaching them things that kids between two and four can do. So looking at what typical kids can do, get started earlier, but looking at is it master at? It should be, it can do they do it. What's, it's the application of the skill. So it's sort of tying in those concepts that we were just talking about. And here's a, here's a fun, interesting article that I found as doing some research. This is called, I can identify Saturn, but I can't brush my teeth. so really looking at what we're teaching, the application of what we're teaching. And I liked this quote in this particular article that says progress is not the acquisition of useless knowledge and or skills rather educational progress is the acquisition of knowledge and skills towards the, towards the eventual of mastery,
- Amanda Fishley: [03:06:56](#) which is the application. So this ties it all together.
- Peter Gerhardt: [03:07:00](#) Yeah, that's a great quote. Yup.
- Erica Holding: [03:07:08](#) I do have a question.
- Peter Gerhardt: [03:07:11](#) yeah.
- Erica Holding: [03:07:12](#) So the previous slides that you're talking about, kind of what a child can do when they're a 10. Okay. I'm talking about my 10 year old. My 10 year old can do a lot of things and he probably was able to do a lot of things that was, you know, on your little matrix. But I never forced them to do it. So what I'm taking away from here is almost that if your child is on the spectrum, get them to do that no earlier, I have them demonstrate that they're actually able to do that because you have to teach those skills early on as opposed to my child knows how to do it. I know that he's going to do that. He's just lazy and I'm too tired at the end of the day and I don't want to get into an argument. So I





don't make him do that, you know, it was it kind of, you know what, how I need to be thinking about this.

Peter Gerhardt: [03:08:03](#)

Oh absolutely. Yes. And where you have your typical son can pick up skills just on his own. Like he's the King of observational learning, you know, and he's got problem solving skills. That's the beautiful thing about being a typical kid. Like you learn all the time. Kids on the spectrum tend not to learn all the time. So we have to make sure that there's learning or duties are there, are structured and are reinforced. So that becomes why it really is, a 24, seven engagement. for the most part. Now that's an overstatement, but it's, that's the general idea. You know, if we're going to do this right. So

Speaker 2: [03:08:47](#)

yeah.

Karen: [03:08:47](#)

Thank you.

Peter Gerhardt: [03:08:51](#)

I'm just, I'm going to know this very, very quickly. but there's, this is how we look at adaptive behavior instruction. there's five components. One is context where instruction takes place. back in 1980 at the Douglas developed the disability center. I was taught, students with autism tend not to generalize well, so teach where the behavior is most likely to be displayed. Yeah. And I keep seeing kids taught things out of context, which means by definition then it's not going to generalize or maintain in the appropriate setting. So context is key to everything we do. Take the free term contingency and put a big circle around it and go with context. And that's how this stuff works. Intensity. A lot of the skills that we teach all older guys is transition, are long chains of skill, of, of smaller skills and they're, they're not amenable to sitting down at the desk and doing 20 trials.

Peter Gerhardt: [03:09:51](#)

So we are often faced with a situation that Johnny only gets to do something once a week, which may no longer be sufficient for him to actually demonstrate skill acquisition. The example I use very quickly, say Johnny age five typical kid with classic autism, that's I'd say is your typical kid, but learned color identification using this great child training, took thousand trials to learn all 64 colors in the Crayola box and now he can do burn number from [inaudible] from golden rod from purple. Great thousand trials. Relays it much. Great. Now he's 16 and we wanted to buy a lunch from burger King. How many trials in the



forms of instructional opportunities do you think Johnny actually gets? And most schools in most programs I go to, I see one a week if I'm sending money, if all the staff showed up, if they didn't get the van that day, if Johnny's having a good day, right. I will point out Johnny goes once a week, it'll take us 20 years to give him 1000 instructional opportunities the same. It took him to acquire color discrimination

Amanda Fishley: [03:11:01](#) [inaudible] and one of them hopeful. I was just thinking with my experience with adolescents once a week to a fast food chain that's, that's, that'd be big that a lot of my clients never had that opportunity that frequently. But how could they ever learn it if they, if they don't?

Peter Gerhardt: [03:11:21](#) Yeah. You know, and, and even at once a week, like you're, you're enter responsible, it's like too long. Like you lose skills over that time period. So we need to look at how do we kick up intensity for teaching these skills so that kids actually acquire the skills, efficient to what is the response effort to actually do this? I think oftentimes we, set up instructional programs that are the most complex long risk way to do something as opposed to the [inaudible] was the easiest, most direct way to acquire the skill. technology is, is making life much, much easier this way and much easier for our students. but we just have to be careful about how we use technology because there's some stuff other there. It's not all that helpful that it looks good and it's easy to waste a lot of money on tech.

Peter Gerhardt: [03:12:13](#) But efficiency is what's the easiest way to accomplish their goal cause there's always going to be a balance between effort and outcome. transfer of control. We were talked about this early on as control light. Like I don't want it to be with me, I want it to be with the environment. I want him to notice that the laundry basket is full, had the light turn green, that the light shopping line moved that, that like that's where I want that [inaudible] needs to the rest of the environment, not with me. And then last and I think the most difficult component is value. Now value really is just what is the, the, the, the naturally occurring reinforcement socially with the task. And much of these things that we try to teach there is little. So what is the motivation then to acquire this particular skill? And if I use external systems or reinforcement, how do I fave those systems at some point so that he can do it?



- Peter Gerhardt: [03:13:08](#) When I was working in New York, we used to start teaching kids how to safely cross the street by starting at the corner across the street from the Dunkin donuts. So that if they waited for the light to change, if we then waited for the people to go and then they went, they went to Dunkin donuts and they bought a donut like that. That's, you know, you can't do that like in a whole lot of places. But you can do that. So that's how we could increase the value of running a task because to do that, in order to get the donut to be able to do this. So next,
- Jacqueline More...: [03:13:40](#) I do have one question. When we're talking about adoptive behavior going into this situation, a lot with school professionals, especially, older kiddos in middle school will have attitude or kind of be snarky and it's not anything that their peers aren't doing, but you know, on the IEP it's written that they'll have appropriate communication. And to the teacher that means that they won't be sarcastic or, you know, we have to Mark down every instance of a time that they give attitude or roll their eyes to a student. I mean, how do you kind of relate adaptive skill versus like typicals, you know, if they already haven't, you know, we may need to work on something else or you know, their typical peers are doing it. So why should we try and eliminate this behavior out?
- Peter Gerhardt: [03:14:37](#) Well, yeah, it's a real great question. It's a great question. and I think some of it falls on changing, modifying the behavior of the typical people in the environment to some extent. But we always have to sort of look down the road and you can't be snarky to your boss, you know? But that doesn't mean that I can't now shape that behavior over the course of the next six months, but I got to get the classroom teacher who gets really upset by it not to get so upset while I do this or it just sort of puts me back. I think we often end up placing restrictions or rules on our students by necessity when typical kids don't have those rules or restrictions. when we were talking about middle school and kids who were included in middle school, and maybe that you're not, you know, you can't touch a girl, you can't do this, you can't do that. But then he walked down the hallway and kids are holding hands and they're making out under the stairway and they're like, all of this. So there's this sort of double standard and it, for me, it often comes down to the, they don't necessarily have the skills to make that decision. So right now least I have to sorta.



- Peter Gerhardt: [03:15:53](#) So try and contain the behavior, even though there's a reasonable argument that says Johnny was doing it, he was doing it. Why can't I do it? I get that. But it's, you know, I think that's how it's always unfortunately going. There's always gonna be some of that in, in what we do that we're going to have to set somewhat arbitrary standards for behavior for kids just because of how it's going to be in the longterm. It's not fair. It's not right, but it is what it is.
- Erica Holding: [03:16:25](#) Right. Good. I remember too though, like you and I having discussions before about the standards that we set for the individuals we work with and how often they're so much higher than the typical population. Like I remember one time we had this working with adults, we had this checklist of what a clean department looks like and we'd go in and clean off the checklist. And I remember one day that the first to do the checklist, came to the office. But yeah, Johnny's checklist. And he would had been in no doubt that there was dust balls behind the toilet on the fourth floor, you know, and I said to the trainer, I'm like, you're never coming over at my house. What you're going to say, like really thought about the significance of that and like how Ellen knows that we can come into their home and how, what is important to point out to them for their safety and their health versus what am I becoming this controlling, you know, social engineer that's just turning them into, you know, I don't know. It would not be, I know so many friends would have failed that checklist put you that way.
- Peter Gerhardt: [03:17:38](#) Well, absolutely. Absolutely. And you know, I was in one of our classrooms a couple of months ago and while I was in there, one of the students engaged in a challenging behavior episode. So staff attention was diverted from this one student who took the opportunity to get up, go over to the closet, grab a bag of Skittles, go back to his desk, sit down, but put the bag Skittles are under his legs. So it was hidden and all I could think of was like, you go guy, good for you. Like that's that he thought to do that and that's what he thought to do. That was astounding. You know, now do I want to do that all the time?
- Peter Gerhardt: [03:18:20](#) If he's that aware of his environment and those contingencies are there, that's pretty impressive actually. Right? Yeah. You know, so I didn't say anything like reinforce it other than the fact that he got a whole bag of skittles. But those little things, I



mean I like actually, you know, all right. one component of adaptive behaviors, social skills and I, I mentioned, you know, I did the personal side of person centered planning of social skill instruction for individuals because they exist because of the function like, like social skills or media by their outcomes and that they're used to acquire desirable and avoid negatives while navigating the environment. Stipulating others in that environment. They are how we get, the thing is we want and avoid the things we don't want. It is that simple. They are, they exist for a reason. Now there is a whole list of arbitrary social skills that exist for reasons that have long become useless.

Peter Gerhardt:

[03:19:18](#)

For example, we shake hands basically to show that we're not carrying a weapon because in the middle ages, the knight would put out his sword in his hand and, and that way he didn't have a weapon. And then the reclass bands and it was like, you know, doesn't have any functional validity today in terms of, no, you know, but so there are some arbitrary social skills and then there are these sort of, more context based social skills that, are still just very functional in their application and we all do this. We all have social skills that we choose to use or we choose not to use at given times. Every single typical person has seen somebody walking in the hallway that they really don't want to talk to and so duct into the bathroom. So they didn't have to see them, you know, so they avoided the social interaction as opposed to get, even though they had the skills.

Peter Gerhardt:

[03:20:11](#)

So I think more and more I'm looking at what is the function of the skills? Why would we want to display the skill in the first place if I'm going to do this right? but the next one I think it, I think a problem that behavioral analysts sometimes mistake behavioral analyst or sometimes make is that when you think that social skills are linear, that I say, hi, my students says what's up? I say not much. You. And they say not much. Social skills are not linear. Social skills are actually logarithmic. They're really complex decision trees. What's the next slide or the one after that?For example, for the next one I can say hi there. My student can say, what's up? How are you? How's it hanging? What's up? I can then say, nah, I much fine you been well been busy.

Peter Gerhardt:

[03:21:07](#)

You where you've been, which they can reply not, I've been around it don't debate. These are complex decision trees.



There's not, and we realize that all of my staff had shaped the greeting response for individual students to be the exact same every time. What the staff said, what the students said. Like there wasn't like a mutual shaping experience. Like the students shirt, the step behavior in a way that actually, so we made a real effort to change it around. So now I may see a student and say, yo Evan, my brother, how's it hanging up? A little man. And initially he would just look at me like, what the hell are you doing? Like, but now he'll say hi cause he knows it's a greeting. He doesn't really know when a company knows it's the greeting. And the fact of matter is when he graduates, I can't train the entire world just to say hi Evan. So I have to teach him how to respond to multiple permutations of the greeting. So the next one, I think we have Brenda's quote,

Peter Gerhardt:

[03:22:12](#)

I'm Mrs Brenda. Miles enrich Simpson. A greeting is a social skill that it's thought to be simple. However, further analysis shows that this skill, which most take for granted to be extremely complex, how a child reads a friend in the classroom differs from the type of greeting that would be used if the two medical, local mall, the greeting is when they first see each other difference from the time when they see each other 30 minutes later for the words and actions of greetings differ depending on whether the child is greeting a teacher or a peer. Greeting things are complex as our most social skills. There is not another skillset in our repertoire that is as context-based as social skills. Every single typical person has about 20 different social repertoires depending on the context in which they are expected to display those skills. So when we teach social skills at a comp context, we're missing the point. So Amanda,

Amanda Fishley:

[03:23:04](#)

yeah, so we talked about how complex social skills are, but then you throw in all the cultural differences and norms that are around us and understanding those can be kind of challenging. And you know, when we work with different cultures and you know, students that have different cultures and backgrounds, I think these are important to take into consideration. But here are just some fun ones that I found online.

Amanda Fishley:

[03:23:31](#)

just [inaudible]



- Amanda Fishley: [03:23:33](#) for a little bit of humor. So Norwegians eat with their their burgers with a knife and fork. The peace sign backwards is flipping someone off in England.
- Amanda Fishley: [03:23:41](#) I didn't know that actually. And then
- Amanda Fishley: [03:23:44](#) some Indians argue that your left hand is not for handshaking or anything other than
- Amanda Fishley: [03:23:49](#) the body.
- Amanda Fishley: [03:23:50](#) And then some are all parts of China. It's acceptable for children to relieve themselves in the streets. So potty training young children in China, in the rural areas is a little bit different than
- Amanda Fishley: [03:24:01](#) maybe it would be here. So I did a little bit more complexity when we talk about cultural differences and that they are important to keep in mind. All right, so I don't know,
- Amanda Fishley: [03:24:13](#) you're still here, Katherine, but you submitted a scenario. If you are still here, please feel free to unmute you, unmute your microphone and go ahead and ask to our panelists and dr Gerhardt,
- Amanda Fishley: [03:24:26](#) are you available? See, okay.
- Katherine: [03:24:38](#) Am I muted now? Can you hear me?
- Amanda Fishley: [03:24:40](#) Yes, we can hear you. Thank you.
- Katherine: [03:24:44](#) Hey how are you, I'm the head of a small private school for kids on the higher end of the spectrum and we're still in early years, but we've kind of gotten our academic curriculum moving and I have been moving now towards the direction of putting in a transition programming and we want to start our transitions, unofficially with our kindergarten nurse, but started officially with our fourth-graders. and I always love the fact Peter, that you talk all the time in many of your talks about the fact that it takes a thousand instructional opportunities and not many people say that. And it's so true. And the biggest gift you could get, anyone have for that reason even with bright kids. I believe that is still true. that it takes a thousand exposures or a thousand lessons before they can learn. So I'm trying to design



this program so that it's stated the art state of the science and fun. and I, I'm really at the design stage, and I like to have pretest and post tests and I, I want to be able to evaluate the efficacy of our program. And so for the panelists that are left, I just would love some input about dependent measures. I mean, I've got IQ, I've got student achievement. I've got, violin scores, but I really would like to know a little bit more about, interests in motivation measures and skill measures in terms of employment that you all have been impressed with.

Jacqueline More...: [03:26:35](#)

I'm going to, really speak quickly to the adaptive or the assessment of functional living skills. The AFL S I love it because in addition to every skill that they may need to complete their employment, this really is just a measure of how well they can take care of themselves. I just remember going through it for a client and one of the questions on there is even, you know, we'll change an empty toilet paper roll without prompting. so that, that to me is just how well can he function and take similarly from the environment and take that as an SD. the FLS I love doing with all of my clients. so that's when that I, that I really do enjoy. I do have to go, but thank you everyone. and thank you so much Dr. Gehardt.

Peter Gerhardt: [03:27:35](#)

Thank you Jacqueline.

Amanda Fishley: [03:27:37](#)

Thank you Jacqueline. Erica,

Peter Gerhardt: [03:27:42](#)

do you have anything?

Erica Holding: [03:27:45](#)

not to get off the top of my head. I, I agree with Jacqueline's what Jacqueline just said. I was looking at the last part of your question about, you know, identifying local businesses and I just remember, when we started going out into the community looking for getting part time jobs and stuff, like we literally just had to do it. Like you actually had to just go in and start talking to owners like right around the area and, and, and introduce the program and create relationships. And, you know, and create opportunities for them to, for it to be a successful experience for both the business and, you know, the, your clients that are going out the first time.

Amanda Fishley: [03:28:26](#)

Thank you.





- Peter Gerhardt: [03:28:29](#) You know, I, I like the idea of the Aprils actually because I like the, like the violin or the cymbal or whatever, like the Aprils is sensitive enough to show change over. A relatively short amount of time. so I think that that was a very good suggestion, given the, the population you work with. and you may already be doing this, but I would think it'd be really interesting to look at, stuff like, like, you know, self advocacy skill, problem solving, error correction. Like, you know, what do we, what do you do if something doesn't work out? How do you fix it? So the idea of fixing the problem as opposed to, cause nobody gets it right all the time. self-management. Like how do you develop your own,
- Peter Gerhardt: [03:29:22](#) self map system, like develop your own goals.
- Peter Gerhardt: [03:29:24](#) These are kids who should be part of their own IEP process, like very involved in their own IEP process. so I've done a lot with this group or I don't like with this group in the past I get very sort of concrete and I know it sounds old school and it's dopey, but we work with kids on teaching how to do pro con sheets. Like if they wanted to do something that they would sit down and write down the pros and the cons of being able to do this. And then, and it was really just like a think
- Peter Gerhardt: [03:29:58](#) what
- Peter Gerhardt: [03:30:01](#) as a thinking tool for them to sort of be focused on it
- Erica Holding: [03:30:08](#) right.
- Amanda Fishley: [03:30:14](#) And so is really,
- Peter Gerhardt: [03:30:15](#) I would also go ahead, I'll shut up.
- Amanda Fishley: [03:30:19](#) No, no, no. I don't want you to shut up, but in each one of these categories then I suggest make, you know, like five bin yets in each area and check off what they do versus then what we would want to teach them to do and then just start working it,
- Peter Gerhardt: [03:30:38](#) I think. A very good idea. Yes. Okay. Well, this is also, yeah, this is also a group that I think,
- Peter Gerhardt: [03:30:48](#) you'd be well advised to invest in the, our whole lives, sexuality education curriculum. it goes from preschool into later



adulthood. because this is the group of students who tend to get in trouble and that particular area tend to be, often the victims of abuse. but also, you know, the really through no fault of their own, cause they were never taught this stuff. Right. I think, you know, it's if you just type into your web browser our whole lives or come to the site by the Unitarian Universalist church, it's very text-based. So you have to adapt everything, but at least it gives you a good idea of what to work with with these kids going forward. and it mostly looking at sort of the safety stuff and respecting your own body and, and that, I just think it'd be really good for this group of kids and since you, you have the opportunity to really do something different and special because not a whole lot of people are focusing on that. And I think that's what a shame

- Amanda Fishley: [03:32:02](#) it is. Yeah,
- Erica Holding: [03:32:03](#) I agree.
- Speaker 2: [03:32:07](#) [inaudible]
- Amanda Fishley: [03:32:07](#) all right. We have one more scenario or two more scenarios. See Ruth, are you here? Are you still here that's submitted this scenario? If not, I can go and just go ahead and read it. I'm sorry. I [inaudible] okay. Let's see. She says a scenario that has been challenging is a 15 year old boy with Asperger's had, Oh, hi Bruce. Great.
- Bruce: [03:32:49](#) Yeah, maybe that's the thing. Abuse is closed for tomorrow. Yeah, I was going to suggest that we could.
- Amanda Fishley: [03:32:57](#) Okay. so anyway, she used submitted that, see the father has always been on the cusp of physically abusive but assured the emotional abuse with no help from CPS after four complaints by various caregivers. Mom has remarried a man that is not from my, with spectrum disorders but is committed to making the effort after dating for four years. Dad is eating a controlling felon that has alienated the client and his siblings watching a tremendous issue between dad and both the children and their mother assisting this young man transition through puberty, Asperger's and all the challenges with his family dynamics has been difficult. Client has a of physical and verbal aggression, not complaints and property destruction. I think the question here,



you know, the reality is we are working with clients that have various backgrounds, just not just in this population of individuals with disabilities, but you know, when we're working with any child or young adolescent, they, you know, not all of them come from these families that are just picture perfect or you know, they have other barriers that are going to impact their transition through adolescence and into adulthood. but when you're dealing with that after Gerhard, you have any suggestions on a short and long term supports that could be put in place outside of, you know, the transition profile and sort of this things that we talked about. But when you're dealing with kids that are going through, you know, different traumas in life in general, is there anything that you've seen that have really been helpful for this population?

Peter Gerhardt:

[03:34:32](#)

you know, it's, it's difficult given how complex this one scenario is. There's a lot of stuff going on here. but I, I would want to, if I was involved in this case, I would want to find a really good cognitive behavior therapist to work with this kid. because I, I think that would be probably, and not just once a week, like a couple times a week. Initially, I think cause otherwise it doesn't generalize, but also this person would work closely with the schools so that we could help reinforce the strategies that were being used because that's outside my area of expertise. That's why I have to sort of refer out and you have to find someone who's actually familiar with, you know, Asperger's syndrome, what we used to call Asperger's syndrome, you know, for them to do this. the second thing is within my expertise, we have a big body of research on like relaxation training.

Peter Gerhardt:

[03:35:42](#)

and I would want to look at this young man at doing like relaxation exercises and, you have to do this very, systematically like you have to like build it up over time and you, you practice it and practice it and you do not introduce him when he's upset until it's actually part of his repertoire. Cause if it's not part of his repertoire, like it won't work. you know, so those are two things I would want to do. I, some of this situation is just outside everybody's control. I would continue to be very aware of issues of abuse and I would report abuse if it came up. But there's, beyond that, I don't know what else to do. but I would also want to actively involve



- Peter Gerhardt: [03:36:35](#) him in his intervention. Like, I wouldn't try and impose any intervention on it, but we want to work with them on an intervention. Yeah,
- Amanda Fishley: [03:36:43](#) yeah, exactly. And I think you did on, you know, it's a big points, is just making sure that we refer to the appropriate clientele. So social workers, if they need counseling, you know, whatever their needs are. But making sure that we're not always, we're not a big umbrella that tackle all the problems that we do rely on other professionals and we work as a team too, and a community to really serve these kids. And it's not uncommon to get clients, especially in the adolescent age and adult age, that have comorbid diagnoses and are dealing with other mental health disorders. So working with that child or that it's all within the family and I think involving other professionals as needed is, is what we would recommend. Ruth. All right. And we have one more scenario. both Donna and I'm saying your name right. I see you're still here. If you wouldn't mind unmuting and asking your question. If not, I wouldn't, I can also go through it. So if you're available.
- Amanda Fishley: [03:37:45](#) Oh, she's trying to unmute. Okay. Yes, no problem.
- Ruth: [03:37:50](#) Hi. How's it going? Sorry. The middle of teaching class and I had a run out.
- Amanda Fishley: [03:37:58](#) Well thank you. Great.
- Ruth: [03:38:00](#) Thanks so much. Okay. Where would you like me to start?
- Amanda Fishley: [03:38:04](#) If you just want to summarize your scenario.
- Ruth: [03:38:05](#) basically I've been working with this young man since he was four and luckily we've got amazing parents that have been super supportive about the fact that we're not just working on academics. So we started doing a lot of transitional things at about nine and 10. And he was in my older group kids that was, kiddos that are doing the whose future is at anyways program, which is a fantastic program. And I'm sorry, I'm trying to create a classroom that's not busy and I'm running and I'm going to go run to the bathroom and hide.



- Ruth: [03:38:37](#) And he has now been in the restaurant for about six weeks a week and we are not stuck with, not only is he at a place where he's frustrated because he's not getting paid. That was the deal with a client, with a restaurant, but also the restaurants starting to feel a little bit frustrated because you know, as a community we really suss them out. We really kind of did a lot of pre-training beforehand, but part of this is it's not just training the young person we're working with, but it's training that environment. This is a place this young man's going to live for a long time. This is his environment. This is a place where it's a smaller community, but also too, there's the respect factor for this young man. As you see from the scenario, we actually got a secret coach to go work with him because if it was anybody from the home team that was going to ruin history cred.
- Ruth: [03:39:31](#) This is a young man who really struggles with his autism and we really want to be respectful of the fact that we are hearing him respecting him and providing him with a coach that is going to actually help him rather than he's going to hate going to work because there's going to be somebody he believes is going to be following him around and prompting him because there's two or three other boys at that place that he wants to be friends with. This boy has learned to take the bus to school himself. He makes friends, he's on the rugby team. He's going to get there. We're giving them every option and opportunity. But now we're going, crap, we've got this far, but what do we do now?
- Peter Gerhardt: [03:40:08](#) How old is he?
- Ruth: [03:40:10](#) Yah, he's 15.
- Peter Gerhardt: [03:40:14](#) 15. Okay.
- Peter Gerhardt: [03:40:17](#) with the, the pay thing that I think is again, not knowing him. So sometimes this is hard. I would, yeah, I would actually have him involved in sort of assessing his own performance. So I would, you know, so that he can chart his own data to like, but then you get to this point, that's what we get paid, man. It's like this is so because, and I like doing that because then it's, it's not, you're not saying it, the business isn't saying it like this is just the agreement. Like this is where we are, this is so you see your progress. Like you're getting closer, you're getting closer and it's concrete It's there. I would probably want to try that. as far as



that goes, the manager shouldn't feel guilty like you're in Portland, right? I believe

Ruth: [03:41:04](#)

British Columbia.

Peter Gerhardt: [03:41:10](#)

Oh, okay. Okay. Sorry.

Peter Gerhardt: [03:41:15](#)

I have to think that it's still similar that the, you know, in the States is like employers are allowed to provide training until people become competent and then they have to pay them, you know, if they're from a specific class, which, you know, autism is part of that class. A

Ruth: [03:41:30](#)

little bit different because a lot of times I'm in a lot of businesses because of WCB, workman's comp and things like that. I'm an American living in Canada, but, it is a little bit different. It's really hard to get a job that will take a kid that hasn't passed all the workman's comp things and hasn't passed all the tests. I mean, we're really fortunate because I will sit there at places and not leave until they let me have a job for a kid. It's a lot of fighting to kind of get a lot of advocating man. And, and again, I'm you and doctor, Gerhardt has similar stories. I came back from the 80s too, you know, worked in the group homes, worked in the shelter villages, ended up working at like a replication sites. So went from the EIB to the older kids because as we know, the older kids scenario's not very sexy.

Ruth: [03:42:14](#)

Right? And so you get to the 15 or 16 year old, and we're working with a group that he's going to be in that community. So we started bringing him to that restaurant. Being a part of that community. People know him there. The stage has been set. We have given him a self, a sheet to self reflect on his ships. we've done, I feel about as far as we've can go. He's just now frustrated that he's not getting there. He's reviewing the chefs we're doing in vivo training. We work with a manager. I guess my real question is in this one, cause I think it's harder for kids like this sometimes that are not so obvious. If there was a more, more effective kid, it's almost easier I think sometimes because I think that everybody's, yeah, right. And kind of building in through that. And with this kid, he interviewed so great, everybody was like piece of cake, man, mom, him, everybody. We did everything right. But now we're stuck.



- Peter Gerhardt: [03:43:12](#) Um, who does his evaluation knowing that he goes to the next, like from two at two hours to three hours to four hours? Is that you or that his employer?
- Ruth: [03:43:20](#) we do it out. We, I can't go there. I have a secret coach that it doesn't know works for me because if he saw me, he sees autism. So basically in a respect to that we choreographed this really well. He's got a secret coach that doesn't even know as his coach that does evaluations. He thinks that person works there and is also in training. we're developing kind of a new system working around that with some of our more capable students because how uncool is it for me, it has been with them since he was four is doing this kind of stuff. So it's a secret coach that works with him and the manager that does it with him. And then he goes home and self reflects and asks more questions and then he's able to come back now the next day and go, what other things am I missing that I can't do? But he started on a 30 minute shift and now he's up to three hour shifts. It's just that they really want him to get up to four hour shifts and with all due respect, so does he, he sees his peers getting paid and being four hours and he's like, why can't I do that dude? But he gets physically tired at about three and a half.
- Peter Gerhardt: [03:44:21](#) So that's, that's the, that's the, the, the challenge. Is that physically tired in three and half
- Ruth: [03:44:26](#) Yeah, he's physically, he starts to kind of engage in a little bit of self STEM cells talking. He's trying to get himself through it, but then the awkward behaviors that he can self regulate so well start to come through like looking in the mirror, you know what I mean? Like kind of, and then somebody goes, is this gluten free? And he's like, I don't know.
- Peter Gerhardt: [03:44:45](#) Oh, what would happen if he worked for two hours and then was given like a 20 minute break, just sorta chill and get his act back together and then go back for two hours.
- Ruth: [03:44:55](#) You know what? I so appreciate you saying that. Thank you. That has was my recommendation to the coach and to the manager and but you kind of supporting that, it really helps me to think that that might be the right way to go.



- Peter Gerhardt: [03:45:11](#) That's, that's what I would do. I mean, that seems like that's a reasonable accommodation for him to be able to be a real employer if it's physically taxing on him. And he, he had four hours. That's how I would approach it.
- Ruth: [03:45:22](#) Yeah. And I appreciate that cause I think we're so close cause this is like a hip really cool place where he's so proud to work. I don't want to give up, but there is that sense of give up fitness. Do you know what I mean? That happens when everybody goes, man, this shit already worked by now. everything was put into place. But you know what, it's so hard to plan for the unplannable. and it's like going back to where a lot of people think. I'm really fortunate, with the parents that I work with that when we get to be 11 and 12, we take out the developmental checklist. He worked on all these skills before he walked into that place having the skills. But what you can't plan for is that fatigue and the, the noises and the realness of, it's not in vivo anymore. It's the Royal place. So, yeah.
- Peter Gerhardt: [03:46:10](#) Well that's the real world. It's a very different environment once you're out there actually doing the job. That's why it's so important to do the stuff you're doing. I think it's awesome.
- Ruth: [03:46:20](#) The other guys in his group that's in my group at that age, the other two guys are gainfully employed and making money. So when they made up a group on what Thursdays, that's also a little bit hard because they're talking about their other gigs cause they're working at the stores and you know, talking about this. So it's a little bit tough with that too.
- Peter Gerhardt: [03:46:39](#) Yeah. No, I would go with what your original plan was. I really would,
- Ruth: [03:46:42](#) I appreciate that and appreciate the feedback cause I think this is such a great Avenue to talk about it. just because sometimes we tend to talk a little bit more about the learners that are going to have coaches for maybe a little bit longer period of time, if not for the long, long haul. And
- Erica Holding: [03:47:04](#) I just wanted to ask you a quick question. so when he has like a completely 75% of a task, he had a copy of his own task list of all of the tasks he's responsible for him.





- Ruth: [03:47:18](#) Yes.
- Erica Holding: [03:47:19](#) Okay. And if you were just to show him the 25% he's missing and take, you know, just break it down and say, these are the last things that'll get you paid. Would it help maybe to break them big list down to just show him what he's missing or have you done that? I mean, and I don't know. You'd probably find that already then.
- Ruth: [03:47:38](#) No, no. Thank you. I appreciate that. We have done that. and I will spend a bit of a catch catch 22 because I think that the things that he's still missing is that kind of the customer service stuff. That's the hardest stuff. Do you know what I mean? Like he still, if a person ages with him that's not in his list, that's where it's harder. Let's wait. We know at a restaurant you can have your task list, but dude, if something comes up, you've got to do it. And if a table is not cleaned fast enough, the waitress is not going to be like, Oh, I'm so glad I'm helping you and I'm not making any money. so for part of that is is it just working as a team, that's the 25%, you know, taking the feedback, taking that because, and I think that's part about you were saying dr Gerhardt is that fatigue and maybe that break would allow him to recharge and be able to take that feedback more readily.
- Peter Gerhardt: [03:48:32](#) Yeah, I would definitely do that. I also, I do want to like agree with you that I think sometimes it is much harder for this type of individual, you know, because people out in the real world don't see them as having a specific disability and they end up thinking that he's arrogant or just argumentative or rude or they had, it's called. So he may want to, you may want to work with him and workers to come up with some sort of disclosure that he can do. He doesn't have to say he has autism. He doesn't have to say, you know, he can say it has an anxiety disorder that makes it hard sometimes. Like just give people some information to help us explain his challenges and people tend to accept that. But if, if there isn't an explanation, like they make their own explanation for it and I finally get to like, Oh, he's just rude. He's so Miles' used to call it. They think he's, they're kind of hidden disability.
- Erica Holding: [03:49:35](#) Yeah. They think he's being a little bit lazy. Right. They're kind of Oh man. Come on. And the other boys that are in his rugby team and whatever that are there, he wants to keep street



cred. He wants them not to know anything because those are his guys at school. So it's, it's complicated and so many wounds, but it's so good to talk about it.

Peter Gerhardt: [03:49:56](#)

Right. Well, good luck. I really wish, I mean, I think it's great what you're doing.

Erica Holding: [03:50:00](#)

Cool. Thanks so much. I so much appreciate all your feedback and your, and your support.

Peter Gerhardt: [03:50:05](#)

Thank you.

Amanda Fishley: [03:50:07](#)

All right, this is the end of our presentation. Thank you all who attended and thank you know. Thank you everybody who stuck around. and thank you, dr Gerhardt. Obviously your input is just invaluable and all of our panelists. Thank you, Erica for sticking around and hanging with us. I know. [inaudible]

Karen: [03:50:31](#)

yeah. Thank you so much, Erica. Dr Gerhardt, you did exactly what I wanted you to do. This actually ended up being four hours, so this is eligible for five C's and next time around, I think three hours and hopefully it doesn't go to five hours, but that's not a thing that happens.

Peter Gerhardt: [03:50:54](#)

Cool.

Karen: [03:50:54](#)

Thanks so much guys.

Erica Holding: [03:50:57](#)

Thank you.