

SAGE Journals

Virtual interview training for autistic transition age youth: A randomized controlled feasibility and effectiveness trial

[Virtual interview training for autistic transition age youth: A randomized controlled feasibility and effectiveness trial - Matthew J Smith, Kari Sherwood, Brittany Ross, Justin D Smith, Leann DaWalt, Lauren Bishop, Laura Humm, Jeff Elkins, Chris Steacy, 2021 \(sagepub.com\)](#)

Volume 25 Issue 6, August 2021

National Autistic Society

Abstract

Autistic transition age youth struggle with obtaining employment, and interviewing is a critical barrier to getting a job. We adapted an efficacious virtual reality job interview intervention to meet the needs of autistic transition age youth, called the Virtual Interview Training for Transition Age Youth. This study evaluated whether Virtual Interview Training for Transition Age Youth can be feasibly delivered in high school special education settings and whether Virtual Interview Training for Transition Age Youth improves job interview skills, job interview self-efficacy, job interview anxiety, and access to employment. Forty-eight autistic transition age youth received school-based pre-employment services as usual with Virtual Interview Training for Transition Age Youth, while 23 autistic transition age youth received services as usual only. Local teachers trained and supervised autistic transition age youth using Virtual Interview Training for Transition Age Youth. Participants reported Virtual Interview Training for Transition Age Youth was highly acceptable. Participants receiving services as usual and Virtual Interview Training for Transition Age Youth, compared to participants receiving services as usual only, had better job interview skills and lower job interview anxiety as well as greater access to jobs. Overall, Virtual Interview Training for Transition Age Youth appears to be effective at teaching job interview skills that are associated with accessing competitive jobs. Moreover, youth enjoyed Virtual Interview Training for Transition Age Youth and teachers feasibly implemented the tool within special education pre-employment transition services. Future research needs to better understand how autistic transition age youth from culturally diverse backgrounds and different social, behavioral, or mental health challenges may respond to Virtual Interview Training for Transition Age Youth.

Lay abstract

Autistic transition age youth struggle with obtaining employment, and interviewing is a critical barrier to getting a job. We adapted an efficacious virtual reality job interview intervention to meet the needs of autistic transition age youth, called the Virtual Interview Training for Transition Age Youth. This study evaluated whether Virtual Interview Training for Transition Age Youth can be feasibly delivered in high school special education settings and whether Virtual Interview Training for Transition Age Youth improves job interview skills, job interview self-efficacy, job interview anxiety, and access to employment. Forty-eight autistic transition age youth received school-based pre-employment services as usual with Virtual Interview Training for Transition Age Youth, while 23 autistic transition age youth received services as usual only. Local teachers trained and supervised autistic transition age youth using Virtual Interview Training for Transition Age Youth. Participants reported Virtual Interview Training for Transition Age Youth was highly acceptable. Participants receiving services as usual and Virtual Interview Training for Transition Age Youth, compared to participants receiving services as usual only, had better job interview skills and lower job interview anxiety as well as greater access to jobs. Overall, Virtual Interview Training for Transition Age Youth appears to be effective at teaching job interview skills that are associated with accessing competitive jobs. Moreover, youth enjoyed Virtual Interview Training for Transition Age Youth and teachers feasibly implemented the tool within special education pre-employment transition services. Future research needs to better understand how autistic transition age youth from culturally diverse backgrounds and different social, behavioral, or mental health challenges may respond to Virtual Interview Training for Transition Age Youth.