

Building College Success

Going to college is a big step in someone's life, and it can bring a mix of feelings like excitement and nervousness. For Autistic individuals, this transition can present unique challenges. The Autism Society is here to help you navigate this exciting journey with confidence.

This resource provides information, strategies, and practical advice to help you achieve your academic and personal goals.



Recognizing Your Strengths and Needs

As an Autistic individual, you have unique strengths and abilities that can help you throughout college. Things like intense focus, ability to recognize patterns, or close attention to detail can support your academic success. It is also important to recognize the areas where you might need support, such as social interactions, staying organized, or sensory processing. Identifying your strengths and support needs early on will provide a strong foundation as you navigate your college journey.

Accessing Support Services

Most colleges offer disability services or other departments designed to provide accommodations for students with different needs. Connect with these services as early as possible to ensure that you have the support you need. Keep in mind that each college has its own rules about what documents they need, and they might need more than your IEP from K-12.

Seeking help is a sign of strength. Asking for and accepting support is an important step in advocating for yourself.



Self-Advocacy and Communication

Self-advocacy is a key skill for all college students, and especially for those with Autism. Being able to tell your professors, the people who help you, and your classmates what you need can make a big difference in your college experience. It's good to practice clear, respectful, and assertive communication and to educate others about Autism if necessary. It's okay to ask for what you need.

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Building a Support Network

Establishing a strong support network is essential to your success in college. This could include trusted friends, supportive faculty members, a mentor, or connecting with other Autistic individuals. Having a group of individuals who understand and empathize with your experiences can provide emotional support, advice, and encouragement throughout your college journey. Many universities and colleges have academic advisors, or student success coaches, make sure you check in with them regularly, as they can help you navigate where you need to go!



Academic and Organizational Skills

Keeping track of assignments, managing time effectively, and balancing academic responsibilities with personal life are key skills for college success. Consider using organizational tools such as calendars, planners, or apps that help manage time and tasks. Don't hesitate to seek help from academic support services, tutors, or study groups.



Managing Sensory Overload

The busy environment of a college campus can sometimes lead to sensory overload. Create a personalized plan to manage sensory input effectively. This might involve finding quiet places to study or relax, using noise-canceling headphones, or having a stress-reducing object handy.



Social Interaction

Navigating social interactions and making friends can be challenging for Autistic individuals due to differences in social communication. Joining clubs or organizations that align with your interests can provide opportunities for meaningful connections. Remember, it's okay to take social interactions at your own pace.



Emotional Well-being

Taking care of your mental health is a top priority. The college environment can be stressful and challenging to navigate, but remember that it's okay to seek help. Many colleges offer mental health services, including counseling and therapy, which can be particularly beneficial.



Career Planning

Start planning for your career early. Utilize career services on campus to explore potential career paths, build resumes, practice interviews, and secure internships. Career planning should consider your strengths, interests, and the accommodations you might need in a professional setting.

As an Autistic individual, you bring unique perspectives and talents to your college community. Remember that everyone's college experience is different, and it's okay to follow your own path. The Autism Society is committed to supporting you throughout this journey and beyond.

With preparation, self-advocacy, and the right supports in place, college can be a rewarding experience where you grow personally and academically, preparing for a successful future.