

Creating an Optimistic View of Life: ASD and Developmental Disabilities

When you invest in creating an optimistic view of your son or daughter's adulthood, you are investing in emotional stability and crisis prevention. We all should care about what happens to children when they grow up to become teenagers and then adults. We don't talk enough about this group and their teen years and adulthood.

Here is an illustration.

When high school days ended, the next few years became a difficult time for Ron because there were few resources that connected him out of his house. Ron's typical day at home was excessively controlling the TV channels, and being obsessed with turning lights on and off. He seemed anxious and depressed most of the time.

His mother was deeply worried about him. The things he used to do he could not do any longer. She was unable to take him into the community, for example to the grocery store because he would obsess with moving items around on store shelves. She felt his life was headed for a real crisis and she feared for his safety. Yet, she was determined to find the help and support Ron needed.

Ron's life began to change when Joseph, a community coach exposed him to settings such as, YMCA for exercise, and stores to shop for clothing and personal items. This consistent structure occurred for months. Ron looked forward to Joseph coming by and the outings.

Eventually, Ron began to show the willingness and the stability that connected him to other people and activities. His favorites were horse-riding therapy and listening to a band he enjoyed at a coffee shop. Surprisingly, Ron's obsessive and controlling behaviors diminished and his capability levels toward accepting different environments increased.

Quality of life for people with autism is a social and a political issue. The emotional well-being of your son or daughter must be considered. Emotional well-being is not the absence of distress or disease. It is something positive to live for, it is feeling safe, being comfortable, and involves being accepted. We must better understand how individualized supports can help alleviate a person's challenges.

But first, it requires that we have shift in thinking toward the value of providing necessary community supports. The truth is, we all play a part in investing and creating an optimistic view for youth with ASD. It may be your teen, your young adult, your brother, your nephew, your student, your client, your next-door neighbor, or church

member with children who have autism or other disabilities.

Take action now. You are the one who knows your son's needs, his strengths, and the activities he might enjoy. You can be a counter force to a crisis forming off in the distance. Today find ways to create an optimistic view for your son or daughter that will impact emotional well-being.

Jackie M. Marquette PhD

www.drjackiemarquette.com

Copyrighted© Jackie M. Marquette Ph.D., Jackie M. Marquette Ph.D., August 17, 2010