

5 Tips for Young Adults with ASD to Ease Your Transition into Adulthood



Patricia O'Connor, August 2015

Growing up is a tough job for everyone! But if you have an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) you usually need more time to adjust to the idea (it's that difficulty with change/transition thing) and more direct teaching to learn what you have to do to live your life as independently as possible. There are no quick fixes but here are a few tips to move you forward into a positive new schedule and a healthy lifestyle once you leave the comfort of that secondary school nest.

WARNING: This information contains an attempt at humour scattered with some sarcasm!

1. Meaningful schedules

Meaningful schedules are powerful tools to get us moving in the right direction. Get to bed at a decent hour and 3:00 am is not decent. If you want to live in the land of the living you have to be awake during the day since that is when most work and post-secondary opportunities are available. Remedy - reduce video game/computer time, schedule bed and wake times daily and reward yourself for sticking to it! Get some help with this one – I know it is a tough one to break! I work with many nocturnal people who struggle to get back on track!

2. Get some outside social contacts

Get some outside social contacts – and I am not referring to Facebook friends and the question I have is...are they really friends?? Get involved with small groups and/or people with similar interests and get connected with other people outside your home on a weekly basis.

3. Learning new life skills

Learning new life skills is something that everyone has to do if they ever intend to live on their own. Here are a few for you to learn while in the comfort of the family abode or by immersion once you move out.

- **Meal planning**, grocery shopping, food preparation and clean up. You can start small with one meal a week and it doesn't have to be fancy. (Pizza, pasta, grilled cheese and canned soup can sustain life but remember variety is the spice of life.)
- **Laundry** – the whole deal – sorting, washing, drying (yes the wrinkles do stay there until the next time you wash the shirt – if you leave it in the dryer for days!) and last but not least, folding and putting them away. Please don't leave clean clothes in the basket and start piling your dirty clothes on top!
- **Shower daily** and then learn the skill of shower and bathtub cleaning. (It is hard to believe that this does not occur on it's own! I think that every young adult thought there was a bathtub-cleaning fairy until they moved out on his or her own. Why not learn the technique in the comfort of your own home under the guidance of a master - mom?)
- **Public Transportation:** How do you get around your town or city? If mom or dad is the answer – time to learn how to use public transportation.
- **Money management:** Where does one begin? With money... yes but, if you don't have a job yet – start with the first point - meal planning and grocery shopping for your family. It will teach you the fine art of how much food costs and will begin the budgeting process.

4. **Get involved in your community**

Get involved in your community. Never underestimate the value of volunteering your time to help others. Not only does this assist the organization that you are volunteering for but it also provides real experience and builds your resume. It is a definite TWO-FOR (Two for one deal!)

5. **Daily Exercise**

Include daily exercise into your schedule. Anyone who has ever worked with me knows how much I harp about this one... (Blah, Blah, Blah ...Pat!) Exercise is important for people with ASD who continually deal with anxiety. Yes - there are many other ways to combat your anxious neurological state of being but begin here. It really works!

Really the most important thing to remember is that being an adult has tons of benefits! So learn the necessary skills, get into a positive schedule and enjoy the ride!

About the Author:

Patricia O'Connor is the author of the course and has a Training/Coaching Centre for young adults. She could be called the Director or Founder but thinks a more appropriate title for the work she does is Change Agent!

Integrated Autism Consulting provides coaching and training for young adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders to assist them to live independent, engaged and meaningful lives. One of the programs offered is the Transition to Life course. <https://www.integratedautismconsulting.com/transition-to-life-about.html> This life preparation course is designed for people with Asperger Syndrome aged 18-28 who require support with the transition into adult life.

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