

# What's Next?

An Empowerment Workbook  
for Teens with ASD

 The Autism Program  
AT BOSTON MEDICAL CENTER



## Inside this Guide

part 1

### **YOUR FUTURE**

Take a short quiz and answer some reflection questions to discover what the future might hold for you!

part 2

### **GETTING THERE**

Measure your independent living skills and test your knowledge about the IEP transition process!

part 3

### **YOU'RE IN CHARGE**

Here you will learn strategies to advocate for yourself in school, at work, and within the community!

What should I do after graduation?



**Your future starts with YOU.**  
**Complete this short personality quiz to learn more about yourself. Then, turn the page to hear about what personality type you might be.**

**1 Which best describes your focus and attention?**

- A: I often get so lost in thoughts that I ignore or forget my surroundings
- B: I notice small details and pay close attention
- C: I focus on the big picture and notice things that are new or different

**2 When I get in an argument with a friend I....**

- A: Get angry at my friend and keep arguing until I win the debate
- B: Avoid the conflict and tell my friend he/she is right
- C: Agree to disagree and move on

**3 Which characterizes your time management skills?**

- A: I set aside time for planning and scheduling
- B: I find myself completing tasks at the last minute
- C: I get distracted easily and can't complete tasks on time

**4 When making a decision you....**

- A: Think impulsively and go with your gut
- B: Think about it over and over and weigh all options
- C: Think critically and pick the best choice

**5 How do you behave around other people?**

- A: I am comfortable and social around others
- B: I prefer to keep to myself than talk to others
- C: I will talk to others when spoken to, but I usually don't initiate conversations

**6 Which statement best describes your future?**

- A: I know exactly who and where I want to be in 10 years
- B: I have no clue what I will do after high school
- C: I have some idea about what I want to do in life but don't know the steps to get there

**7 How do you describe your study habits?**

- A: I am organized and focused when I study
- B: I am slow to start studying but eventually get it done
- C: I struggle to find motivation to study

**8 How do you describe your level of worry?**

- A: I'm at ease most of the time
- B: I have worries from time to time
- C: I tend to dwell on things and worry a lot

# Because this quiz is all about YOU there are no right or wrong answers

Understanding who you are and what makes you unique will help you figure out where you want to go. Thinking about your answers to the quiz questions, see if your personality fits any of these profiles:

Sound like you? Foster this interest by joining a club with people who enjoy discussing the same topics as you. A club on your favorite interest doesn't exist at your school? No problem, start your own!



## Logistician

"Practical and fact-minded individuals, whose reliability cannot be doubted"

## Debater

"Smart and curious thinkers who cannot resist an intellectual challenge"

If you too love to learn, identify which class you find most intriguing. Challenge yourself to take it at a higher-level next year. Or if you are graduating, maybe see what colleges offer courses in the subject area you enjoy learning about most.

If you're the type to always have a plan, now is a good time to try and be spontaneous. Don't be afraid to step out of your routines and comfort zone; try something new!

## Architect

"Imaginative and strategic thinkers, with a plan for everything"



## Remember:

**Everyone's personality is different. If you don't relate to one of the types here, don't worry! The important thing is to know yourself. Having an understanding of what you're good at and what you like will contribute to a successful future.**

## CAMPAIGNER

"Enthusiastic, creative and sociable free spirits, who can always find a reason to smile"



If this describes you, take advantage of how social you are and participate in volunteer opportunities to better your community!

## Adventurer

"Flexible and charming artists, always ready to explore and experience something new"



If you're the adventurer type, channel your energy into a tangible passion. Finding something you can commit to might be the start of a career or higher education

to learn more about your personality type visit: [16personalities.com](http://16personalities.com)

# READ. RESPOND. REFLECT.



**WHAT IS YOUR DREAM JOB?**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Responding to these questions can help you figure out your likes, strengths, and hopes for the future.

**What is your favorite class and why?**

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**What are things that you do well?**

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**What do you like to do for fun?**

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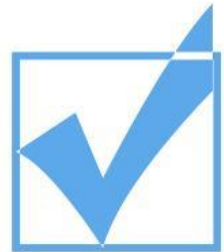
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# Autonomy Checklist



Measure your independent living skills with this Autonomy Checklist! Identify if each skill 'needs practice' or is 'accomplished.' If necessary, include a comment in the 'notes' section.

Needs  
Practice

Accomplished

Notes

	Needs Practice	Accomplished	Notes
I can cook at least 5 healthy meals by operating kitchen appliances and following recipes			
I can navigate public transportation and get around the city			
I can dress appropriately for the weather and occasion			
I can put my dirty clothes in the hamper, wash them in the washer and dryer, fold them when they are clean, and put them back where they belong			
I can the set the table before meals and clean the dishes after meals			
I can clean my room, make my bed, and change the bedding			
I know what to do in the case of an emergency			
I can manage my money and follow a budget			
I shower and brush my teeth daily			
I know how to search for things I need in my community (groceries, post office, banking)			
I can manage a calendar and keep track of important appointments			

Great job knowing your autonomy skills!



Now, check out these amazing local resources to help you accomplish everything on the checklist, receive assistance with the transition process, and learn about exciting opportunities after high school!

"Easter Seals Transition services assist youth with disabilities achieve personal growth and develop skills that will help them navigate educational, community and career settings"



'The Lesley Threshold Program gives young adults the opportunity to experience college life in an atmosphere in which they can be successful, achieve, and feel good about themselves'



in a work environment, meet like-minded interns, and work in one of our impressive Boston metro area collaborating businesses"

"At Aspire interns gain important social skills needed to succeed at work, learn how to apply their knowledge and qualities



"The AANE Life Management Assistance Program provides intensive, highly individualized coaching by professionals who focus on identifying and overcoming the specific barriers each client faces so that the clients can increase their levels of independence towards reaching their full potential.



"The School to Work Program provides services to individuals' ages 14-22 with developmental disabilities. These young adults develop pre-vocational skills, receive mentoring supports, job coaching, transportation training, life and social skills training and other supports as needed"



"The Middlesex Community College Transition Program is a two-year non-credit certificate program designed for students with significant learning disabilities who would find college level academics too challenging, even with extensive supports"

# True or False?



**KNOW  
YOUR  
RIGHTS!**

Test your knowledge about IEPs and the transition process with this short 'true or false' game. Then, check your answers on the following page.

TRUE

FALSE

**#1**

The IEP process includes transition planning

TRUE

FALSE

**#2**

The transition planning must be addressed by age 18

TRUE

FALSE

**#3**

Transition planning includes topics such as navigating transportation and managing money

TRUE

FALSE

**#4**

You are not allowed to be present at your IEP meeting

TRUE

FALSE

**#5**

An individual can stay in the public education system until they turn 21

# True or False Answers:

1

True

That's right! The IEP must focus on what you should know and what you should be expected to do after high school. The IEP team must concentrate on designing an educational program that will lead to independence at home and within the community after graduation.

2

False

Actually, in Massachusetts the IEP team must begin to consider transition services by age **14**. This ensures that there is plenty of time to make sure that your goals and visions of adulthood can be achieved.

3

True

The IEP transition process includes topics that are:

- ★ Based on your needs, choices, and preferences
- ★ Based on your strengths and weaknesses
- ★ Focused on instruction and services for education, employment, and other postsecondary living schools

4

False

YOU are the most important person involved in transition planning. It is essential that you play an active role throughout the transition process.

5

True

Your graduation date should be based on the completion of your IEP goals. This includes academic goals, social goals, and transition goals. Under federal law you can technically stay in the public education system to reach these goals until you turn **22**.



# Questions to Consider...

Who has made your IEP goals thus far?

Up to now who has made the big decisions in your life?

So far who has made your doctors appointments?

If your answer was anything but "me" to these questions, now's a good time to learn about self-advocacy!

What is Self-Advocacy?

**self-ad·vo·ca·cy**  
*noun*  
*The ability to speak up for yourself and for things that are important to you.*

Now that you are thinking about high school graduation, it is a good time to start practicing how to be your best self-advocate. Making decisions for yourself, knowing your strengths, disclosing your diagnosis when appropriate, participating in your IEP meeting, and understanding your rights and accommodations is a great place to start!

Self-Advocacy means making decisions for **YOURSELF!**

**What are some things you should think about when making a decision on your own?**



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Self-Advocacy  
may involve  
**DISCLOSURE!**



"As I poured out my emotions to her, I felt as though a huge weight that was holding me down and draining me of my energy was finally lifted from my body. I felt like I could breathe again; that all the pent up pressure was being released from my body, as a balloon letting all of its air out, slowly but surely. By the time we had finished talking, I knew I had made a true friend that day, and I began to feel that maybe people would understand if I told them, and that I wouldn't have to keep this side of myself hidden forever." -Graham

**self-**  
**dis·clo·sure**  
*noun*  
*a process of communication through which one person reveals themselves to another.*

**Excerpts from "Asperger/  
Autism and Disclosure:  
Our Stories" developed by  
AANE**

"When I disclosed to my employer I framed it in a way that was, "These accommodations will help me be an even better employee/ help me keep doing a great job." The accommodations helped me stay with that job longer than I probably would have otherwise. The accommodations lowered my stress levels, increased my stamina, and fostered a sense of trust, allowing me to relax and be myself."-Karen

"My early positive experiences reinforced the idea that I already had about disclosure- I am to be very open about my diagnosis. While others might feel they need to choose when to disclose, when to not, I will choose the other route. I will share it with people. This means when it came to interviewing, choosing to disclose was an easy decision. I openly discussed what it was like for people to deal with being taught forced eye contact in school, and how uncomfortable it made me. They didn't avoid hiring me. In fact, both places I currently work look at me being autistic as a positive thing in my employment." -Stephanie



**THERE ARE LOTS OF GREAT DISCLOSURE  
SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES AVAILABLE  
TO YOU. CHECK OUT THE LINKS ON THE  
LAST PAGE TO FIND OUT MORE!**

Some things I want others to know about me are:



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# NOW, USING WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT SELF-ADVOCACY, WHAT WOULD YOU DO IN THE FOLLOWING SCENARIOS?



You have a test coming up and you're worried that you will not have enough time to complete it. What can you do?

- a: Skip the test! It's not worth the stress!
- b: Contact your professor and request extra time.
- c: Form a study group to help better prepare yourself.
- d: Rush through the test to make sure you will finish it.

Forming a study group is a great way to prepare for upcoming tests. However, our best recommendation is to contact your professor and tell him/her about your diagnosis and accommodations. Explain to your professor why extra time on the test would be beneficial.



You recently got in a fight with your friend. What can you say to help him understand your feelings?

- a: Get over it, it doesn't matter that your feelings are hurt.
- b: Stop talking to your friend.
- c: Explain to him that you have difficulty understanding others' feelings, reactions, and nonverbal cues.
- d: Yell at him for not understanding your feelings

Telling your friend that you sometimes have trouble with emotional reciprocity, and social relationships (or disclosing to him that you have Autism) will likely help resolve the conflict between you and your friend. Discuss with your friend what things he or she can do or say to avoid future fights.



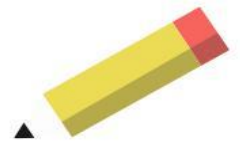
You are struggling at work. What can you say to your boss to help resolve the problem ?

- a: Don't say anything! Your boss can't know you're struggling.
- b: Request a meeting with your boss to discuss challenges you are having at work.
- c: Quit! Work shouldn't be hard!
- d: Tell a co-worker about your struggles and hope that it will get back to your boss.

It is perfectly normal to encounter challenges at work. Requesting a meeting with your boss to sit down and tell him about what you are struggling with will allow you to work together and problem solve a solution. You can tell your boss about your Autism diagnosis and any accommodations you feel would be helpful in the workplace. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) your boss cannot discriminate against you based on the disclosure of your disability.



A question I have about the transition process/  
my future is:



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## What's Next?

Bring this guide to a trusted adult (parent, counselor, coach, mentor, therapist) to discuss your transition process and any other questions you still have about life after high school!

**See links on the last page to find more information about these resources**



ONLINE TEEN HEALTH CAN ANSWER QUESTIONS ABOUT SEXUAL HEALTH, DRUG AND ALCOHOL SAFETY, AND OTHER HEALTH-RELATED TOPICS.

The College Internship Program is a comprehensive post-secondary support program for young adults on the Autism Spectrum and with Learning Differences



Massachusetts Partnership for Youth in Employment brings people together to help youth with disabilities find community jobs statewide

Think College! provides resources, support and training on college options for teens with intellectual disabilities



The Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative offers students grants to increase academic and career success by being included in a college or university community of learners



The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission's Vocational Rehabilitation Program assists individuals with disabilities to obtain and maintain employment



We hope this workbook has been useful in helping you think and get excited about your future after high school!

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# Links and More!

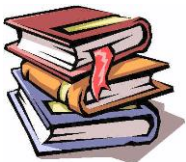


## Transitioning Resources

- AANE Life Management Assistance Program: [www.lifemap.aane.org](http://www.lifemap.aane.org)
- Aspire Internship Program: [www.aspireinternships.org/program-overview](http://www.aspireinternships.org/program-overview)
- College Internship Program: [www.cipworldwide.org](http://www.cipworldwide.org)
- Easter Seals Transition Services: [www.easterseals.com/ma/our-programs/youth-services/youth-transition-services.html](http://www.easterseals.com/ma/our-programs/youth-services/youth-transition-services.html)
- EMARC: [www.themarc.org/school-to-work-transition](http://www.themarc.org/school-to-work-transition)
- Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment: [www.mass.gov/edu/birth-grade-12/higher-education/initiatives-and-special-programs/inclusive-concurrent-enrollment/about-the-program.html](http://www.mass.gov/edu/birth-grade-12/higher-education/initiatives-and-special-programs/inclusive-concurrent-enrollment/about-the-program.html)
- Lesley University Threshold Program: [www.lesley.edu/threshold](http://www.lesley.edu/threshold)
- Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission:  
<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/consumer/disability-services/vocational-rehab/>
- Middlesex Community college: [www.middlesex.mass.edu/transitionprogram/](http://www.middlesex.mass.edu/transitionprogram/)
- Teen Health Online: [www.teenhealthfx.org](http://www.teenhealthfx.org)
- Think College! : [www.ThinkCollege.net](http://www.ThinkCollege.net)

## Disclosure Resources

- AANE Disclosure Stories: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=OkE\\_exU9hbmK](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OkE_exU9hbmK)
- Autism Speaks Transition Toolkit: <http://www.autismspeaks.org/family-services/tool-kits/transition-tool-kit>
- Autism Research Institute Self Advocacy: [www.autism.com/services\\_self-advocacy](http://www.autism.com/services_self-advocacy)
- Interactive Autism Network Choosing to Disclose:  
[www.iancommunity.org/cs/adults/deciding\\_when\\_to\\_disclose](http://www.iancommunity.org/cs/adults/deciding_when_to_disclose)



- Shore, S (\*2004). Using the IEP to build skills in self-advocacy and disclosure. In S.M. Shore (Ed.), Ask and tell: Self-advocacy and disclosure for people on the autism spectrum (pp 65-105). Shawnee Mission, KS: Autism Asperger Publishing.

- Sibley, K. (2004). Help me help myself: Teaching and learning self-advocacy. In S.M. Shore (Ed.), Ask and tell Self-advocacy and disclosure for people on the autism spectrum (pp. 33-63). Shawnee Mission, KS: Autism Asperger Publishing.