

My Autistic Employee: A Mobile App to Promote More Inclusive Work Environments

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SOME STRENGTHS OF AUTISTIC EMPLOYEES

- Attention to detail
- Memory skills
- Pattern recognition
- Efficiency
- Honesty
- Loyalty
- Unique perspective

(Cope & Remington, 2022)



BENEFITS OF INCLUSION FOR THE WORKPLACE

- Better management practices
- Innovation
- Untapped talent
- Work atmosphere
- Positive values



ONE CHALLENGE – MAINTAINING EMPLOYMENT

- Frontline managers often have no formal training
- Misconceptions
- Miscommunication
- Unaddressed concerns

Supporting managers is one part of the solution!

OUR APP – MY AUTISTIC EMPLOYEE



MODULE 1 – AUTISM SPECTRUM KNOWLEDGE SCALE

- ASK – GP
- 31 true or false items
- Previously validated (McClain et al., 2019)

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Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders (2022) 52:5523–5524

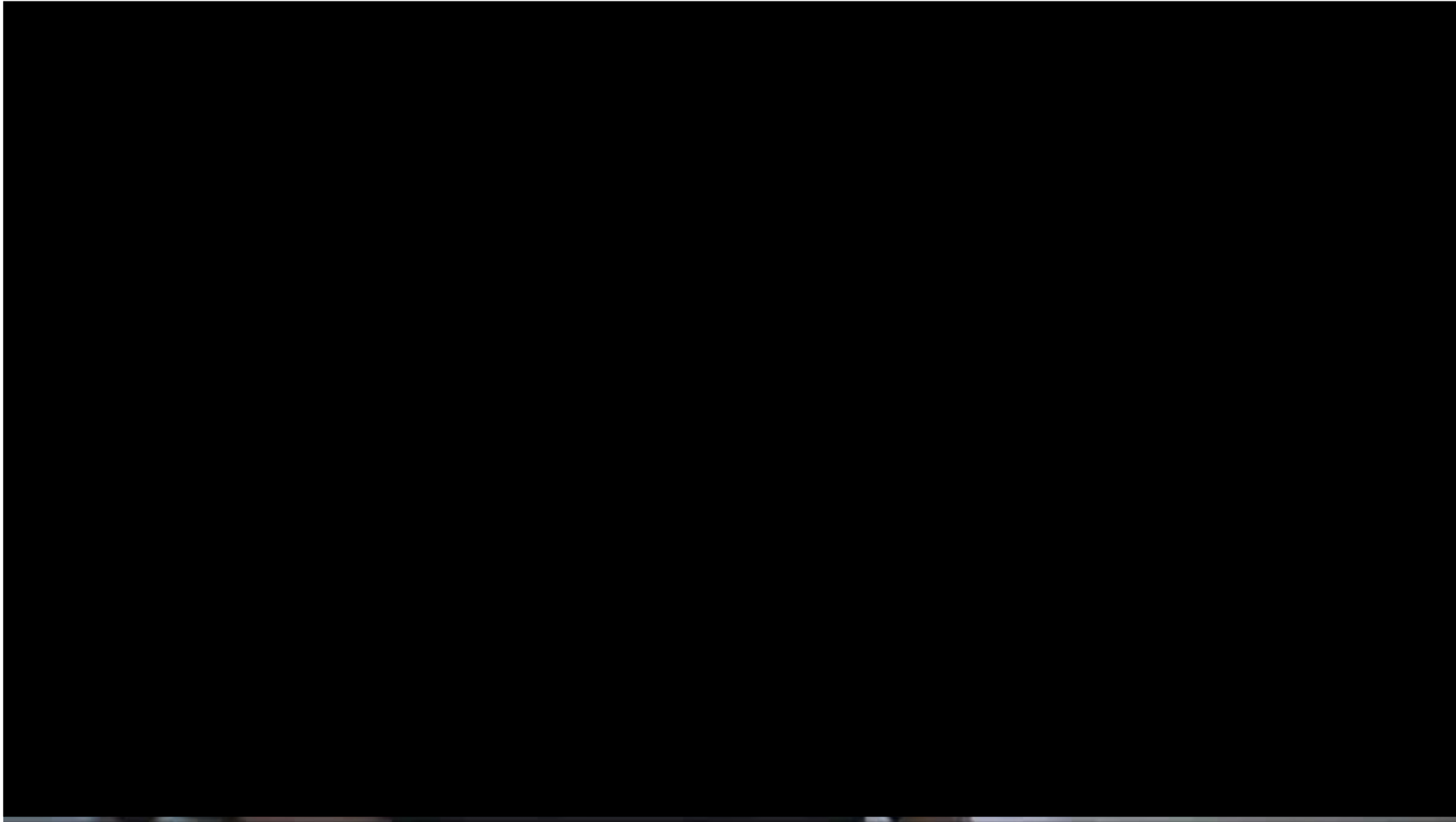
Table 2 ASKSG Items and Response Choices, with both the percentage of sample responding correctly and estimates of item difficulty from the Rasch Model

Item #	Item text	Correct response	Observed % correct	Item difficulty parameter (Eta)	
				Est.	SE
13	Many individuals with autism spectrum disorder have difficulties expressing themselves	True	88.68	−1.494	0.178
10	Individuals with autism spectrum disorder may have strict routines or rituals	True	87.42	−1.368	0.170
5	Autism spectrum disorder is caused by a lack of motherly warmth	False	85.85	−1.225	0.162
11	Individuals with autism spectrum disorder have difficulties interacting socially or others	True	83.96	−1.068	0.155
31	Many children with autism spectrum disorder are at risk for academic difficulties	True	83.65	−1.044	0.153
24	Social skills training is an effective treatment for some individuals with autism spectrum disorder	True	83.02	−0.995	0.151
9	Children with autism spectrum disorder may not play with toys the way they are intended	True	81.13	−0.858	0.146
26	Most individuals with autism spectrum disorder will never learn to speak	False	80.50	−0.815	0.144
17	If a teacher believes a student has autism spectrum disorder, they can make a diagnosis	False	79.56	−0.751	0.142
8	All individuals with autism spectrum disorder have low intellectual quotients (i.e., IQs)	False	78.30	−0.670	0.139
12	Some individuals with autism spectrum disorder may be uncoordinated or clumsy	True	75.16	−0.479	0.133
22	There are no beneficial treatments available for individuals with autism spectrum disorder	False	75.16	−0.479	0.133
28	Autism spectrum disorder only affects children	False	74.84	−0.460	0.133
27	Symptoms of autism spectrum disorder do not change throughout an individual's life	False	71.07	−0.252	0.128

MODULE 2 – INFORMATIVE VIDEOS



MODULE 3 - TESTIMONIALS



MODULE 4 – TROUBLESHOOTING

Productivity, completion, and quality

- Quality of work is not adequate
- Lack of initiative
- Procrastination
- Pace of work

Unusual or disruptive behaviors

- Behaviors that have no impact on work
- Repetitive behaviors that interfere with others or work
- Disruptive behavior during routine changes and transitions
- Other disruptive behaviors

The screenshot shows a mobile application interface in French. At the top, there are three red circular icons: a back arrow, a person with a red 'X', and a question mark. Below these, the text 'Le défi est en lien avec:' is displayed in red. Underneath, there are two list items, each with a checkbox. The first item, 'Productivité, complétion ou qualité du travail', has an unchecked checkbox. The second item, 'Comportements dérangeants ou inhabituels', has a checked checkbox. At the bottom of the screen, there is a dark grey button with the word 'Suivant' in white.

MODULE 5 – FINDING HELP

- For each region (Québec only)
- Across Québec
- Across Canada
 - Canadian Association for Supported Employment
 - Inclusion Canada
 - March of Dimes
 - Employment Works



OUR STUDY

- Recruited managers online
- Two groups
 - Control: 22 managers who did not use the app
 - Experimental: 17 managers who used the app
- Demographics
- Four questionnaires
 - Openness toward Autism Scale (OAS; Nevill & White, 2011)
 - Societal Attitudes Towards Autism (SATA; Flood et al., 2013)
 - Autism Spectrum Knowledge scale (ASK-GP; McClain et al., 2019)
 - System usability scale (Brooke, 1996)

A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS

- 43 years old
- 12 years of experience as manager
- 62% identified as female
- 90% knew someone with autism
- 80% had university degree
- 50% had already included an autistic person in the workplace



PRELIMINARY RESULTS

- More knowledge in group who used app
- No difference in attitudes or openness
- Nonetheless...
 - 94% would recommend to other managers
 - 87% appreciated the content of the app
 - 87% found the content useful to facilitate integration
- 57% managers want more support for integration

SOME CAVEATS

- Attrition
- Small sample
- Highly educated
- Usage data unavailable



COMPLEMENTING THE APP

Virtual Reality – In the Shoes of an Autistic Person



TO REMEMBER

- Mobile technology is no silver bullet
- App may improve knowledge
- Impact on behavior remains unclear
- Plan for human support too
- Interpersonal relationships seem important
- More research is needed!!!



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Thank You!

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