

# **S.A.F.E.T.Y Works: A Strength and *Career* Model©**

**Connecting Youth with ASD and Developmental Disabilities to their  
Strengths, Job/Careers, and Work Effectiveness**

**A Proposal to Provide Career Education, Self Awareness  
Development, and Employment Opportunities for Youth and Adults  
with ASD, DD, and Disabilities**

**Aligned with  
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)**

by Jacquelyn M. Marquette, Ph.D.  
The Marquette Index LLC  
[www.marquettestrengthsindex.com](http://www.marquettestrengthsindex.com)



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## **I. It is Time to Leave Behind the Trail of Status Quo**

For over three decades federal initiatives have promoted employment for individuals with developmental disabilities including those with significant disabilities. Yet, the outcomes for many students remain unchanged year after year: unemployed, isolated from peers and languishing at home waiting for a service.

There is an unemployment problem for those with and without disabilities. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported 16-24 year olds are unemployed and even more disturbing, there remain 4.8 million job openings in our economy, the highest number of job vacancies since January of 2001. The question becomes - why aren't more youth getting employed? According to a report by the Council of Chief State School Officers (2014), a Task Force on Improving Career Readiness, indicates one possible cause may be our education system is not keeping up with the goal of getting students "college and career-ready.

According to the Department of Labor Only 19.8% of individuals with disabilities aged 16 and over actually participate in the Labor Force. The Center of Disease Control (CDC) reports that 1 in 6 children in the United States had a developmental disability in 2006-2008, ranging from mild disabilities such as speech and language impairments to serious developmental disabilities, such as intellectual disabilities, cerebral palsy, and autism. Lastly the CDC reports, 1 - 45 children receive the ASD diagnosis.

Most individuals who have an ASD whom I have worked with suffer with a PTSD, are terrified of community settings and interacting with people? Unfortunately, while waiting for services, many develop additional clinical diagnoses, such as depression, OCD, etc.

These alarming statistics indicate we must begin to solve the problem. I believe I have something unique and valuable to bring to the disability employment table. It has been my lane to research and teach that which increases emotional adaptation, as it relates to daily living, work, and careers. I have 30 years of professional experience in special education in the area teaching, consulting, and in qualitative research.

Most importantly, I have an adult son with autism in his 30s. Together we have navigated four transitions since high school graduation. He had a job for 11 years at Meijer INC., using Customized Employment, and is an accomplished award winning abstract artist now for 14 years. He lives interdependently in his own house with a caregiver for the past 16 years. We practice daily the S.A.F.E.T.Y WORKS principals, which have pulled my son and me through a treacherous and enlightened journey over

the years. These principals were validated in my qualitative research through hundreds of case studies with young adults with ASD and their families.

## **II. Now, A Reason to Celebrate**

According to the LEAD CENTER there may be a reason to now celebrate big changes that can impact better employment outcomes for students with disabilities.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is designed to improve work access and outcomes for job seekers with and without disabilities. The big changes include the emphasis is on career pathways and sector partnerships, and the promotion of the employment of individuals with disabilities within in demand industries and occupations.

## **III. WIOA Offers Big Changes to Individuals with Disabilities**

According to the LEAD Center at the National Disability Institute (2015) the emphasis of WIOA on students and individuals with significant disabilities offer big changes in ten ways:

1. Make employment a goal for people with disabilities - even those with the most significant or severe disabilities - full or part-time work.
2. Students aged 14 - 21 are now included in career preparation and employment services.
3. Competitive integrated employment and customized employment are added to Title IV.
4. Determination of strengths, needs, and interests of the individual is considered. There must be an emphasis on career pathways.
5. The application of the discovery process for best 'job match'.
6. Appropriate job options for individuals are designed and created to meet specific needs of the individual and employer. It is essential to utilize strength assessments to identify hidden abilities and talents.
7. Flexible strategies are to be used to make a good job match doable for the individual.
8. For the first time customized employment is added to Title IV. The value of Customized Employment which utilizes an individualized approach to employment planning and job development -- one person at a time...one employer at a time. Customized employment is defined in Title IV. It is a flexible process designed to personalize the employment relationship between a job candidate and an employer in a way that meets the needs of both. It is based upon an individualized match between the strengths, conditions, and interests of the job candidate and the identified business needs of an employer.

## Customized Employment in the Workplace Might Look Like This

Task reassignment -- Some of the job tasks of a worker are reassigned to a new employee. This reassignment allows the incumbent worker to focus on the critical functions of his/her job (i.e., primary job responsibilities) and complete more of the central work of the job. Task reassignment typically takes the form of job creation, whereby a new job description is negotiated based on current, unmet workplace needs.

Job carving: An existing job description is modified, containing one or more, but not all of the tasks from the original job description.

Job sharing: Two or more people share the tasks and responsibilities of a job based on each other's strengths.

### 9. WIOA ASSERTS: An emphasis on Developing Partnerships to Promote Employment within Industries and Occupations

This collective framework may have the greatest impact on individuals with disabilities.

Too many individuals with disabilities have not made the successful transition to work. Complex social problems can be solved only by cross sector coalitions that engage all relevant stakeholders:

- Employers
- Workforce Development System
- Education
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Mental Health Service System
- Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities Service System
- Adult Education and Literacy Programs
- Social Security Ticket To Work Program
- Non-Profit Disability Organizations
- People with Disabilities

### IV. A Unified State Plan

WIOA requires a single Unified State Plan to be submitted, and the plan must include the outcomes of individuals with disabilities work preparation and opportunities.

There are six core programs under WIOA:

Department of Labor Programs:

the Adult Program (title I),  
the Youth Program (title I),

Department of Education Programs

The Adult Education and Literacy Program (title II),  
Vocational Rehabilitation Program (title IV of WIOA)

and  
Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973).

#### **V. Introducing S.A.F.E.T.Y. WORKS To Implement WIOA**

**S.A.F.E.T.Y WORKS** is a strengths employment model, that looks through the lens of an individual's capabilities, strengths, and emotional awareness. The S.A.F.E.T.Y. WORKS Model utilizes a new assessment, the *Marquette Strengths and Career Index (MSCI)*. The S.A.F.E.T.Y. WORKS Model is **not** based upon deficits or treatments expressed within the medical model that are based upon disability diagnoses and functional levels. Thus, we believe that all individuals with disabilities have strengths and capabilities that can open doors to employment.

#### **VI. What is the S.A.F.E.T.Y WORKS Model?**

Strength Recognition in these areas (177 items): hard skills, self-expression, personal preferences, and self-emotional

**A.** Awareness.

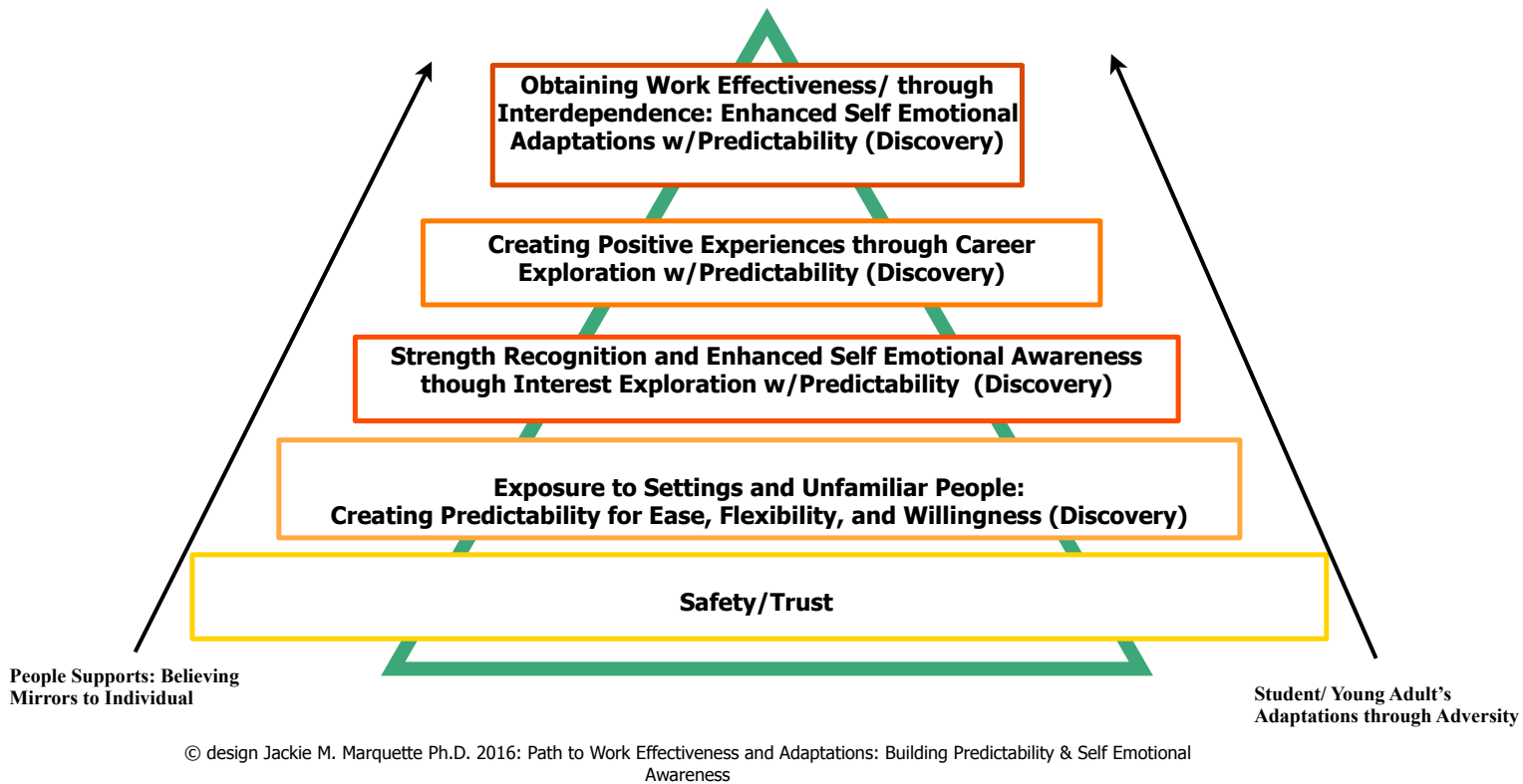
**F.** Fostering adaptation through Power Practices.

**E.** Creating ease and capability.

**T.** Transforming young adults and

**Y.** Youth with ASD and developmental disabilities into employees with increased 'work effectiveness'

## Enhancing Predictability & Self Emotional Awareness in Individuals with Autism: Reaching Work Effectiveness



### VII. A System of Strengths

The S.A.F.E.T.Y WORKS Model, begins with the Marquette Strengths and Career Index (MSCI) an assessment to engage the student to discover positive qualities within. When considered altogether vocational possibilities are enhanced. Secondly, the insights and findings from the student's assessment includes a list of job/careers that may align with the individual's interests and strengths. Thirdly, a curriculum of activities is offered to guide and engage the student through career exploration, deeper strength recognition, and self awareness. Lastly, the student may be captured with interest, motivation, and self direction to choose a career pathway, one that is a good match with strength development and on-the-job capabilities.

### The S.A.F.E.T.Y. WORKS Emphasizes Two Essential Processes

Predictability -- Individuals with ASD especially crave predictability because most fear and suffer high anxiety with change and interactions with others. Most are living with a PTSD from past experiences of being bullied. In reality we live in an uncertain world. Yet when the individual has 'predictability' within settings of uncertainty, it

can be grounding/supporting similar to an anchor on a boat. The predictability can reduce anxiety, and promote ease and capability. There are many tools and strategies, but two simple examples are offered: the individual operates off of a task checklist or a time schedule. There are many more options to create predictability that shows in the findings after the individual takes the MSCI.

Discovery Process The second tool is the use of the Discovery Process (DP). The Discovery Process (Callahan and Garner, 1997) for the design of a good job match has been used since the 80s. Establishing a good job match is essential, however, that is not complete.

The S.A.F.E.T.Y WORKS model takes the Discovery Process (DP) to much deeper areas so the individual may gain strength recognition. For example, it is suggested to use the DP with the student ages 14 - 21 to engage in career exploration, hands on job shadowing and job tryouts for the design of a career portfolio. Equally important, the DP can foster the development of self-emotional awareness for outcomes of increased work effectiveness. This is unique to the S.A.F.E.T.Y. Model. For WIOA implementation, Stevenson and Fowler (2016) suggest that professionals in agencies and school become familiar and use the discovery process on behalf of students with disabilities. We offer activities that engage the student into self awareness for deeper discoveries in moving through adversity.

## **IX. The 'WHY' Behind The Marquette Strengths and Career Index (MSCI)**

A few years ago I designed a personal checklist of strengths that emerged from my qualitative research findings. This became a simple assessment that I used in my professional practice. This checklist guided me in my consulting work with students and adults who had an ASD and were transitioning from high school to work or college. This initial assessment evolved into the MSCI as I provided my service to more individuals and gained additional insights.

When I first met with these individuals, I listened deeply to their dreams and goals and heard in their expressions their eagerness to have a job or go to college. I discovered many didn't know what they wanted to do for work. While some had an idea, most didn't know how to get moving in the right direction. College or certifications appealed to some individuals, but not others. Self employment options such as an art business seemed to be an interest but putting all the pieces together was an unknown to their parents or other advocates.

The tool offered in the S.A.F.E.T.Y. Works Model is the *Marquette Strengths and Career Index (MSCI)*, an individualized, in depth and informal instrument.

**Individualized** All career options are linked to the individual's selection of their strengths. The MSCI contains hundreds of career possibilities including a hierarchy of volunteer, part time jobs, self employment, certifications/training, careers requiring a college degree.

**In depth** There are 177 interests and strengths, the career ideas or options are provided an immediate printout after the student takes the online tool.

**Informal** There is no score, no comparisons, no set criteria to be considered for work or employment. Everyone is winner. There are always next step options for exploration and self emotional development. “Findings provide superable data utilized for career decisions” Pat M., IND Teacher/Specialist

There are four different quadrants, to the overall tool.

Part A. guides the student to read the items that were written to reflect activities and interests that may apply to career pathways. Part A also reveals cognitive development. The student selects the items that appear to be most like the student.

Part B. guides the student to read the items and make a selection about his/her unique self expression interests, talents, and gifts. Their selections may also provide insight into certain career pathways.

Part A and B are not specific only to individuals with autism or disability, but can be helpful to all students in general education aged, 14 and over. What was most surprising to me is when general education students took the MSCI, they discovered their findings true to them and insightful. A principal of a middle school in WI will be using the MSCI this upcoming school year with all students, general education and special education students. The tool has been viewed as a career assessment for students with autism and for typical non disabled students.

Part C. allows the individual to select his or her personal preferences. The purpose here is to turn these findings into a plan that looks like the best possible work environment for the student. The assumption here is that when a student’s preferences to maintain work are met, then he or she has greater capability to be effective. Some examples that may bring insights about a good job match include: the type of environment/structure, types of tasks, schedules that work best, coworkers in department. Knowing these things may enable carving a the best possible job match from the beginning for the student (ASD, ADHD, etc.).

Part D. guides the individual to select the items that he or she can relate to in managing and handling emotions. These are also called, soft skills. In Part D, the emotional competencies were written to align with Goleman’s (2006) framework of Personal and Social Emotional Competence.

Throughout the past 30 years, I reviewed numerous transition and career assessments and recognized that emotional competencies were missing in many transition and career assessments. A student’s emotions drive everything, that is, their choices and decisions are always tied to emotions. Thus, emotional strength recognition is important for all students including those who have disabilities and those without

disabilities. I discovered that when a student's career preparation is tied to cognitive ability only, the student lacks the necessary preparation for personal and social emotional competencies. Thus he or she is likely to struggle on a job, at the college campus, and/or in careers. I see current career education for individuals with disabilities, in complete. I wanted emotional competencies to be part of the MSCI because everyone including students with disabilities do better in work settings when they have developed strengths in emotional competencies.

#### **About Emotional Competencies:**

Because I wanted to focus on the factors that often lead to job success and job loss, I worded the Emotional Competency questions in Part D so students could recognize their reactions to particular issues. Many individuals have self emotional strengths, unfortunately, these strengths get buried because other areas of competence are viewed with much higher importance, such as cognitive skills in math and reading.

I wanted individuals to be able to recognize their emotional strengths within themselves because many feel they come up short or are never enough to fit in. Because individuals have difficulty coping with their emotions, their struggles often show at school, at work, and in their interactions or with peers. I designed *Power Practices* which are lessons in a curriculum designed to provide youth the opportunity to gain self awareness, and develop their strengths through guided practice.

I want to share some of the valuable strengths that are widely known to individuals with ASD: attention to detail, highly skilled in a particular interests, using the logical approach for problems solving, having less concern about what others may think of them, showing strong visual processing skills, having direct communication (although can be a limitation), loyalty, and honesty. Everyone has strengths, it only requires recognizing them first in order to recognize and create a best job/career. See Appendix A: The Marquette Strengths and Career Index (MSCI) Content Category and The MSCI: Finding Categories.

#### **X. Our Mission**

Our mission is to support schools, organizations, the business community and individuals with disabilities so everyone wins when individuals with disabilities get hired in competitive and integrated work.

#### **XI. Who Benefits from S.A.F.E.T.Y. WORKS Model?**

##### **Students and adults who:**

- are interested in knowing their strengths and possible career paths based upon their strengths.
- have greater challenges, and increased need for supports.
- are unclear about a career path.
- lack confidence.
- struggle with social anxiety.
- feel they don't fit into a logical progression of study for a career, but have specific talent to develop and use in self employment.



- view themselves in a category of neurodiversity or high functioning or a developmental disability.
- have a significant disability.
- has an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).
- is in Other Health Impairments (OHI) category.

## **XII. A Pilot Study: Students with Disabilities Identify their Own Strengths**

A school administrator once mentioned that her high school students with autism could not name any of their own strengths. The truth is, it may be difficult for any of us to make a list of our strengths as we see them. Thus it may be difficult to pull out of one's mind, specific strengths. Additionally for students who have feelings of low self worth, it may seem impossible. However, when students were offered a list of strengths in an engaging format they are able to check the items that are 'most like them', it became possible. For students with a significant disability, the parent/ teacher may provide interaction so the student can select, or the parent/teacher may take the assessment based upon their experiential knowledge.

Let's examine what young adults and their advocates say about their strengths? A small independent pilot study was conducted with twenty-five individuals with a developmental disability aged 18 to 28 and twenty-five individuals who were either a parent or an advocate to the young adult. The question was: "Can Individuals with autism and other health impairments identify their strengths?" The young adult and his/her parent/advocate participated in taking the MSCI, selecting strengths (Marquette, 2016). After taking the MSCI, the participants completed a rating scale of 12 questions. These young adults were able to recognize their own strengths. See Appendix B: Pilot Study

## **XIII. How We Work to Solve the Problem of System Failed Outcomes for Youth**

- a. Best Practices For Schools: Using the S.A.F.E.T.Y. WORKS Model for students aged 14 - 21:
  1. Assess career interests using MSCI.
  2. Have students choose their own career to explore. Provide opportunities for career exploration based upon the student's interests.
  3. Tailor activities to meet student's needs.
  4. Assess self awareness capability using MSCI.
  5. Assess for student readiness, if student is not yet ready, make cultivating readiness an initial focus.
  6. Set up scenarios from Power Practices so students will see how using their self emotional awareness can be rewarding and pay off to keep a job.

7. Help students use lapses and slip-ups in self emotional awareness development as lessons to prepare themselves better for next time.

8. Utilize feedback on student's progress in self emotional development and career exploration from teachers, parents, peers, school staff, family members, etc.

9. Guide student to use naturally arising opportunities for practice at school and home, and try the new behaviors repeatedly.

10. Build a network of student support and encouragement. Even a single buddy will help. See Appendix C: Two Profiles Sarah and Trent's Findings from the Strength and Career Index Findings

### **b. Best Practices Among Partnerships: Securing and Supporting Employment for Individuals with Disabilities**

1. It is sometimes difficult to see how a person with significant disability can have a job. **With the S.A.F.E.T.Y Model strengths are enhanced and Power Practices engage youth into career awareness, career exploration and self awareness development. These in combination can prepare the individual for work.**

2. Often when individuals choose to disclose their disability, they often find themselves not chosen for the job. **Individuals with disabilities will gain insight into the benefits of disclosing a disability for a job. Employers will recognize unique capabilities these individuals hold and see them as resources to their business.**

3. When individuals choose *not* to disclose their disability, they may eventually face job loss because of a misunderstandings on both sides, the employee and the employer. **The gap of misunderstandings can be narrowed with the action steps in individual preparation and employer preparation all within S.A.F.E.T.Y WORKS Model.**

4. Many individuals with disabilities who are hired are not placed in jobs that match their strengths or interests. **With the findings from MSCI and guidance through career exploration, the gap of placing individuals in mismatched jobs can be narrowed. Thus, more aligned job matches for job candidates can be determined through discovery of job matching.**

5. Often individuals with ASD suffer job loss when they have an emotional shut down due to sudden work changes or they may have a melt down because of a misunderstanding with a coworker or manager. **Because of the assessment of strengths in self emotional awareness areas and the experience with Power Practice activities, the individual may gain increased understanding. Some examples may include: 'what to do next' and 'how to**

manage' or to 'seek out an assigned 'go-to person' for the purposes of clearing up misunderstandings, thus preventing unfavorable outcomes. Additionally, employers will access to steps preventing and handling slip ups. One example of this may be to gain the awareness about when to clarify upcoming changes that will effect the employee who has autism. It may take reaching out to job coach or other advocate first. This acts as preparation for individual to ready himself, see the benefits of the change, thus he is capable of predicting the change and is better prepared for it. Using the findings from the Personal Preference findings can provide strategies for smooth transition within the workplace.

6. There exists a wide gap of understanding of the needs and strengths of individuals with ASD.

Our tools and services can assist in providing clarity, strategies that work, thus narrowing that gap. There are subtle practices and responses that employers or coworkers can use to enhance the work maintenance and effectiveness of the employee on the job. These practices are offered through consultation and sensitivity training.

7. The notion exists that only individuals with disabilities who are high functioning can hold a job.

In contrast, individuals with significant disabilities have been effective at holding a job because the acknowledgement of the employee's challenges were understood. Also, the design of personal supports offered the employee ease to manage the daily tasks of a job. Indeed, a good job match or self employment in the real world is attainable for many with autism or developmental disabilities.

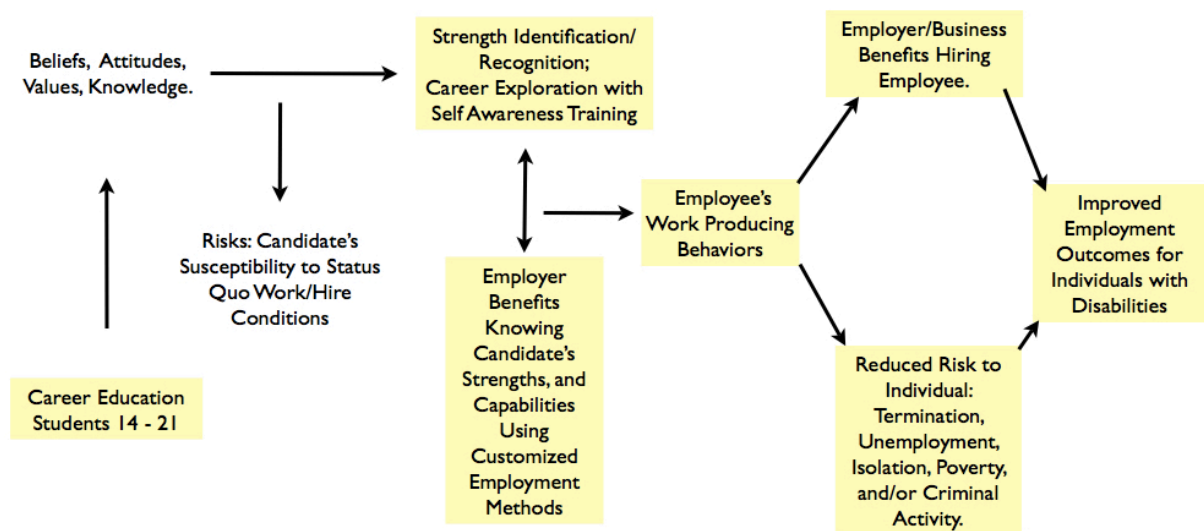
8. To be independent is the goal for many parents and educators for individuals with ASD and developmental disabilities. It is often thought that independence on the job is a must and a criteria to meet before entering employment. When an individual has independence, he or she is viewed as making a unique contribution to the job.

**But when we strive to create interdependent models and support systems, each employee contributes their best strengths, and the business, the department, as a whole is better for it (Goleman, 2007). We believe that interdependent models may be effective the employment of individuals with ASD and developmental disabilities. See Appendix D: Nine Power Practices that Move Students from Index Findings to Action**

#### **XIV. How We Serve Schools and Organizations**

We Serve Schools and Organizations who prepare individuals with disabilities to become career ready during and after high school. We offer the S.A.F.E.T.Y. WORKS Model with the Marquette Strengths an Career Index (MSCI) as a tool to determine their strengths, interests, and job options that become a good fit to the individual's interests and abilities. Our aim is to:

- To provide written materials, curriculum of activities to move student through the process of Career Awareness, Career Exploration, and choosing Career Pathways to narrow down interests.
- To provide written materials, activities to enhance know their true work preferences, and develop self emotional awareness.
- To provide training via face-to-face or webinars to support staff in implementing the S.A.F.E.T.Y model for students with disabilities.
- To provide interactive video discussions on the internet about using the S.A.F.E.T.Y. model for career readiness, career exploration, and self emotional development.
- To provide sensitivity training to Businesses and Leaders who want to hire and will hire individuals who have participated and certified in the S.A.F.E.T.Y Model.



**Simple Model of Positive Career Education for Students and Adults with Disabilities: WIOA with S.A.F.E.T.Y Model Implementation**

\*Candidate, Individual, Student: All references apply to an individual with a disability.

## XV. Conclusion:

When the student/individual uses these tools within the S.A.F.E.T.Y WORKS Model with guided career exploration, they may become familiar about work options in engaging ways. When they use Power Practices, to practice using their strengths they can become more self aware. Having access to solutions to move through adversity at work and in life such as bullying, the individual may feel safe and capable.

Additionally, with strategies of support for employers, job candidates will be acknowledged for the challenges and noticed for their strengths. The S.A.F.E.T.Y WORKS Model with pre planning preparations for the disabled population can change the status quo in our communities from lack of career education, jobs, and income to effective **employment outcomes**. The schools, service agencies, employers and business leaders in the community will be able see these individuals as resources and viable employees. Most importantly, individuals with disabilities can become contributing members of society. This is the intent of WIOA. See Appendix E: S.A.F.E.T.Y. WORKS: A Strength and Career Model

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## Appendices

Appendix A: THE MSCI Content Category (175) Items and THE MSCI: Findings from Four Categories

Appendix: B Pilot Study

Appendix C: The Strength and Career Index Findings: Two Profiles

Appendix D: Nine Power Practices that Move Students from the Index Findings to Action

Appendix E: S.A.F.E.T.Y. WORKS Model

Appendix F: Testimonials

# APPENDIX A

## **THE MSCI Content Category (175) Items and THE MSCI: Findings from Four Categories**

## THE MSCJ Content Category (175) Items

<b>Hard Skills</b>	<b>Self Expression</b>	<b>Personal Emotional</b>	<b>Prefer- ences Capability</b>
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<b>35</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>71</b>

## THE MSCJ: Findings from Four Categories

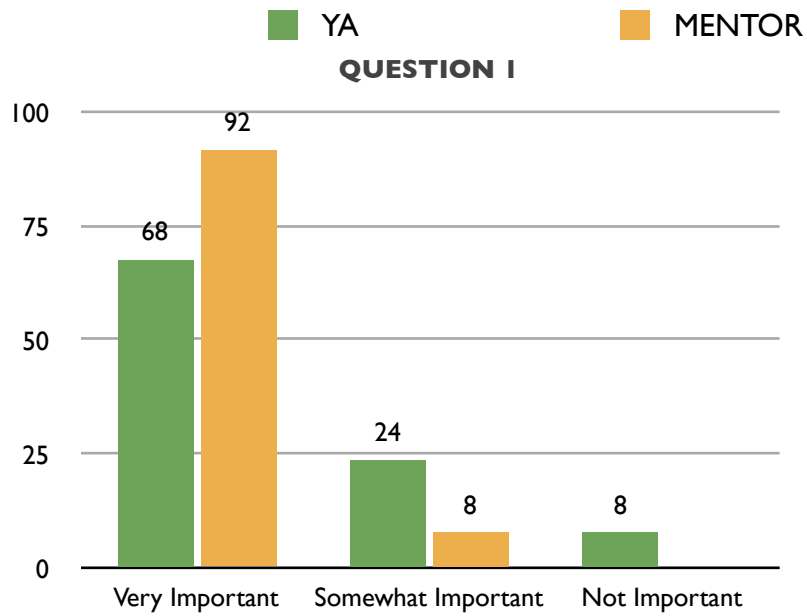
Hard Skill Options	Self Expression	Personal Preferences	Emotional Personal Capability	Emotional Social Capability
Strength Development	Strength Development	Structure within Environment	Self Awareness	Empathy: Awareness of others' feelings/ concerns
Career Exploration	Career Exploration	Career + Environment + people	Self Regulation	Influence
Volunteer	Volunteer	Environments and Activity	Trust Worthiness	Political Group Awareness
Job Shadow	Job Shadow	Patterns in Problem Solving	Self Confidence	Communication
Certification	Certification	Patterns in Learning	Conscientious	Team Capabilities



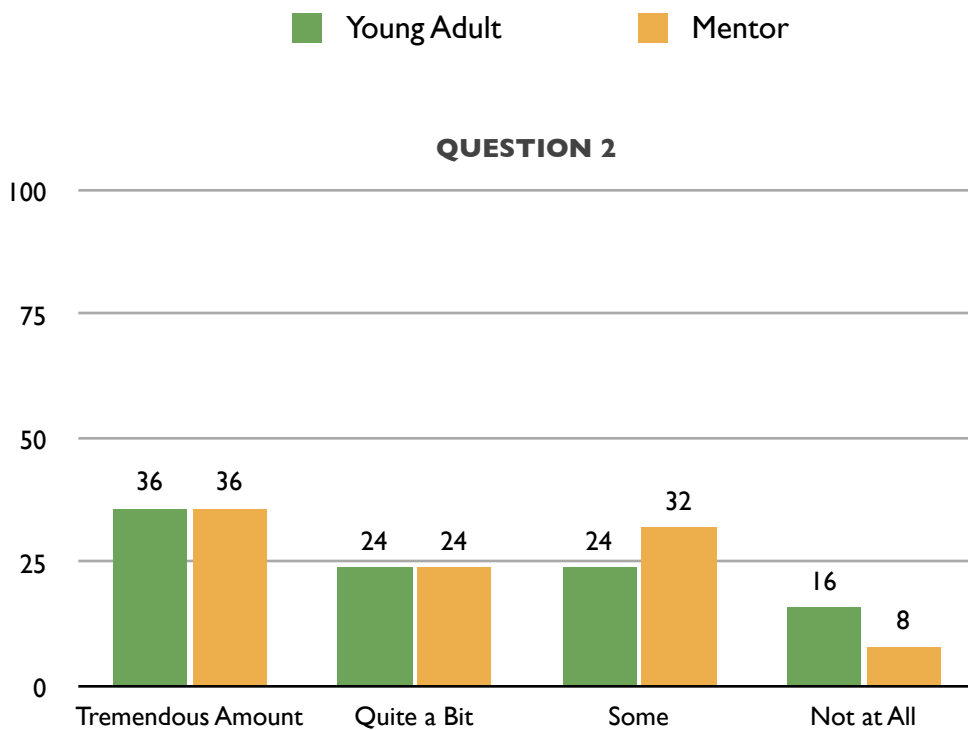
<b>Hard Skill Options</b>	<b>Self Expression</b>	<b>Personal Preferences</b>	<b>Emotional Personal Capability</b>	<b>Emotional Social Capability</b>
Self Employment	Self Employment	Communication supports: using tools, in settings, with people	Initiative	Building Bonds
part time job	part time job	Environments: Working Independently	Motivation	Service Orientation
College Degree	College Degree	Connected to Others	Adaptability	Collaboration/ Cooperation
Advanced Degrees	Advanced Degrees	Using Equipment/ tech support within environments		
		Motivation: Training/ Education		

# APPENDIX B

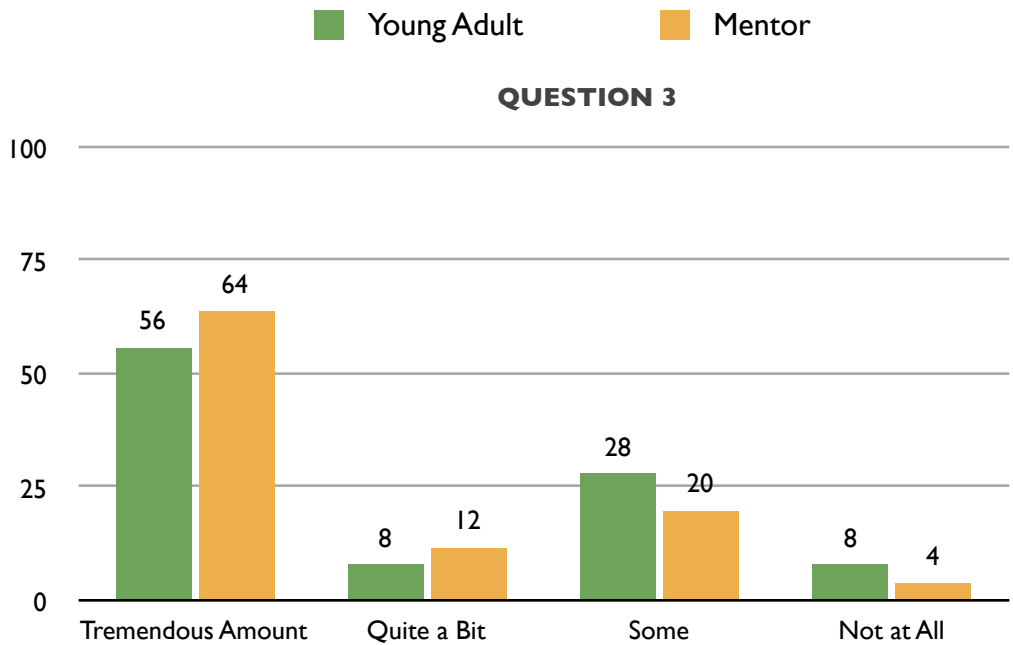
## Pilot Study



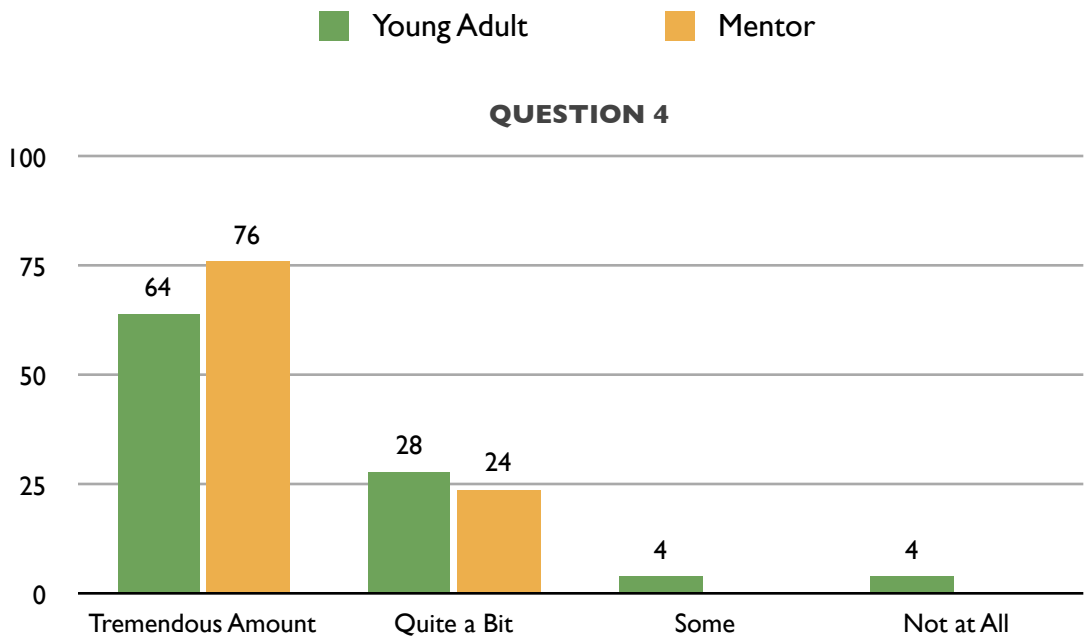
YA = 25 M= 25 Q 1: How important do you think it is to know what your strengths are for a job or a career you want?



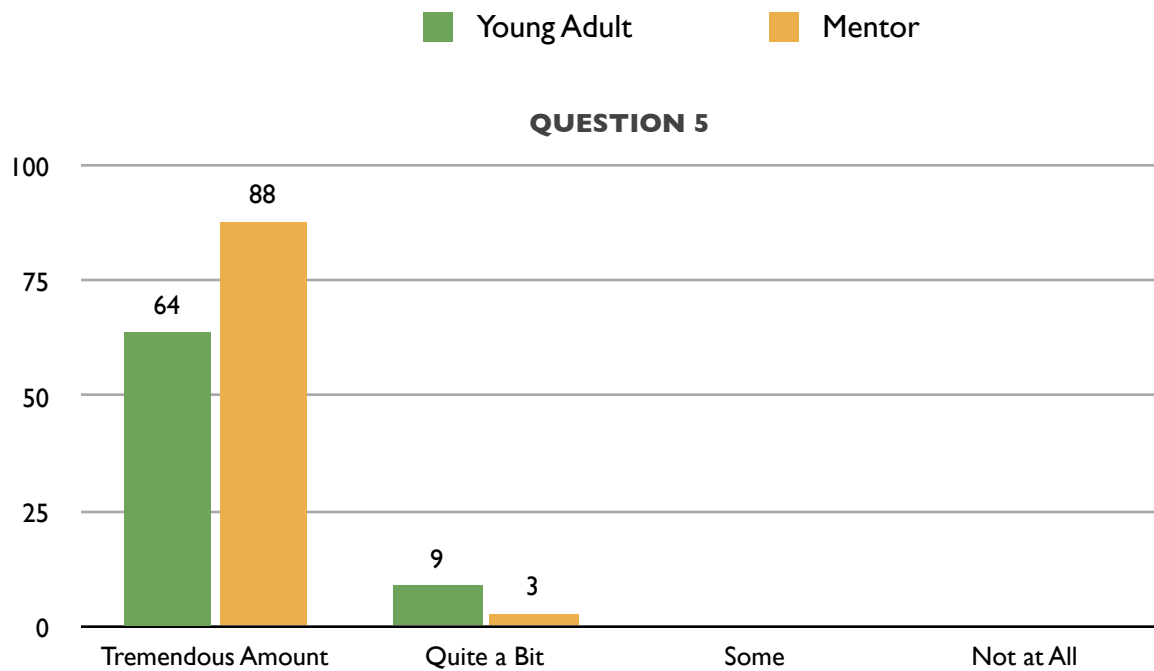
YA = 25 M= 25 Q 2: How much do you think that Section A, Hard Skills (skills you can be trained on) matter to your job or career.



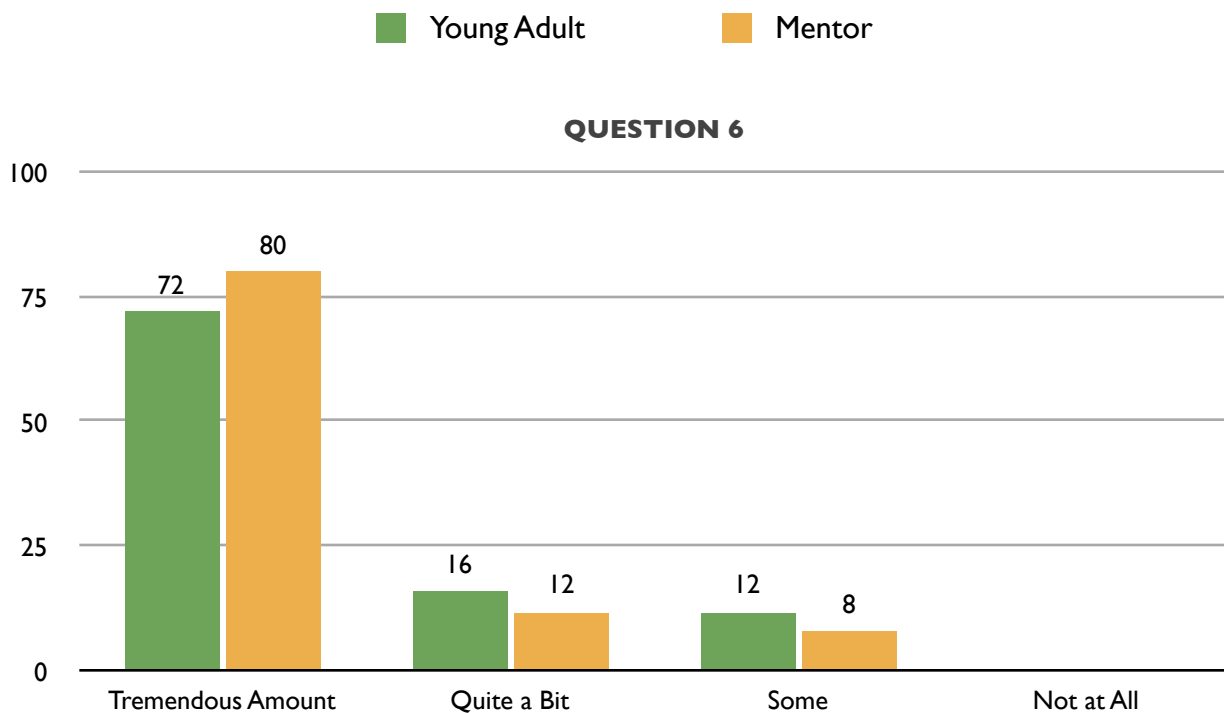
YA = 25 M= 25 Q 3: How much do you think that Section B, talents in the arts or specific skills in self expression matter to your job or career?



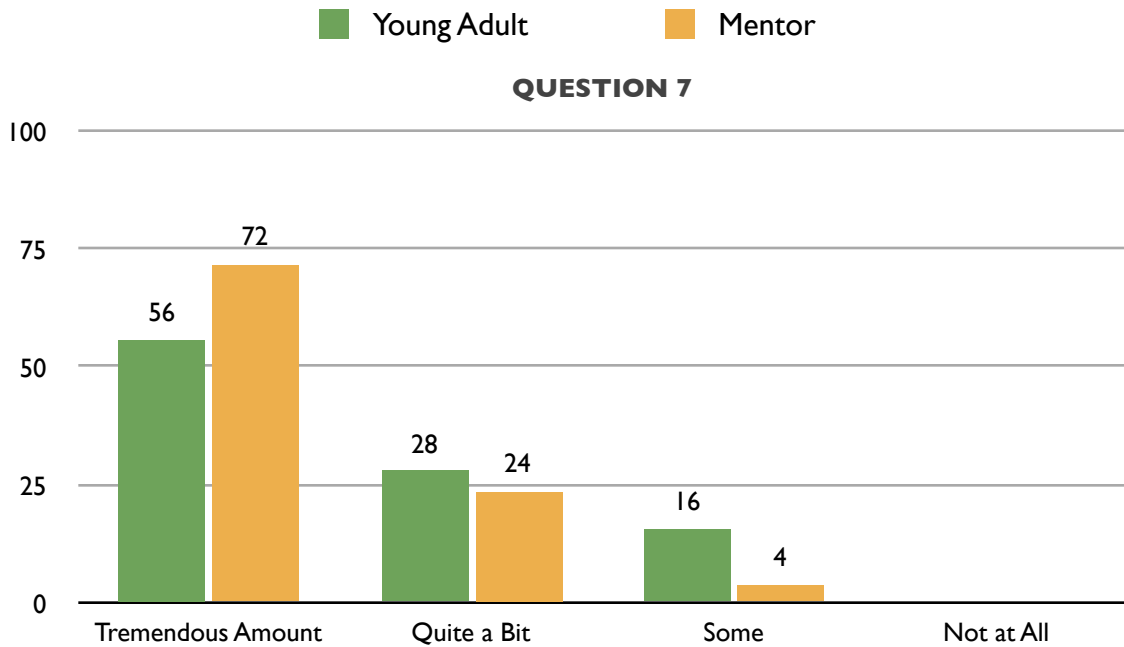
YA = 25 M= 25 Q4: How much do you think it matters that a supervisor notices your strengths on a job or in a career?



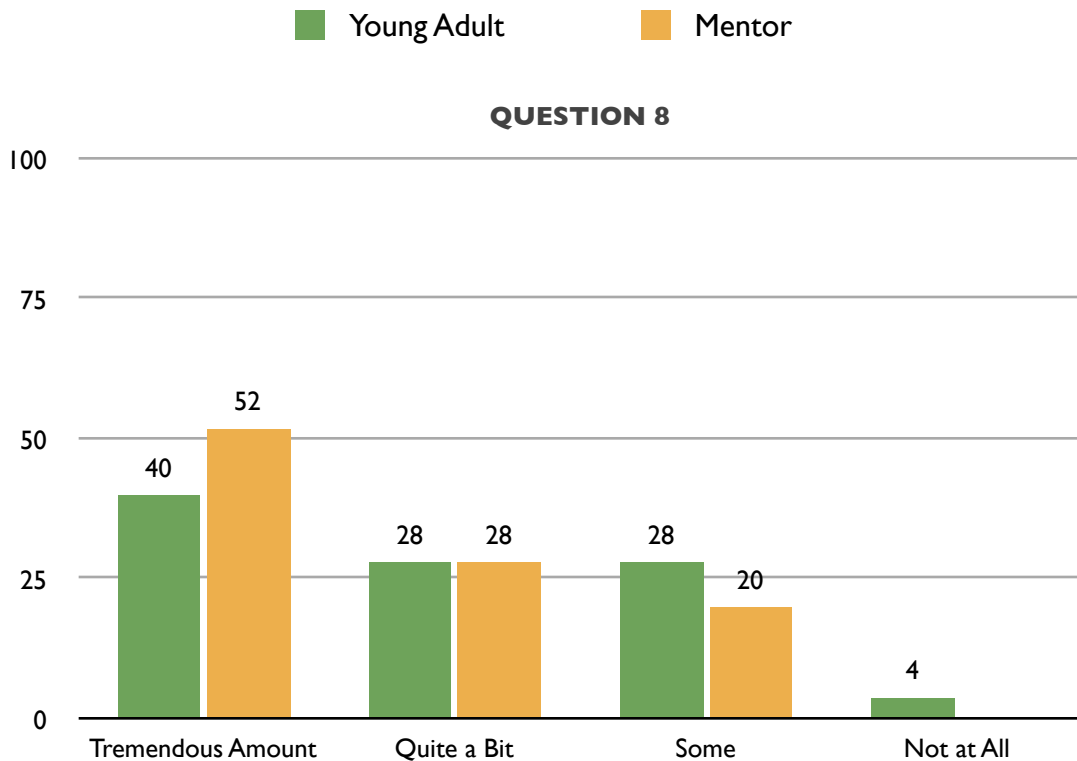
YA = 25 M= 25 Q 5: How much does it matter to you that you have a job or a career in an environment you feel capable to do your best on a job or a career?



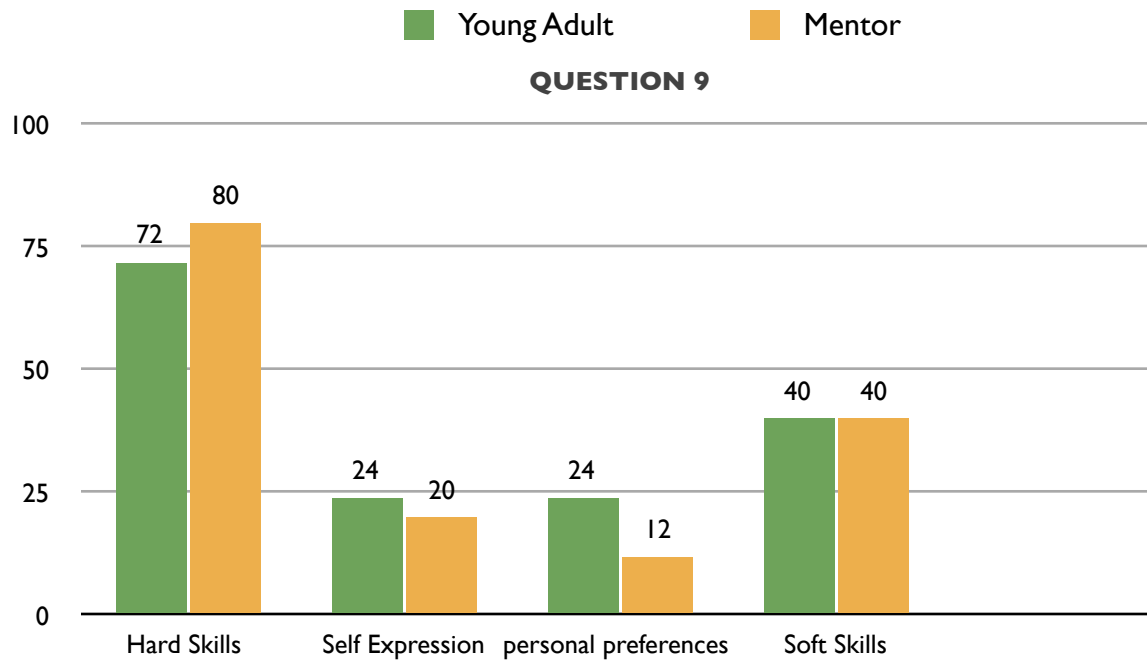
YA = 25 M= 25 Q 6: How much do you think your personal preferences for structure matters so you can do your job? [some examples, structure to prepare and get ready for work, time of day to work, task structure, pace (fast or easy)]



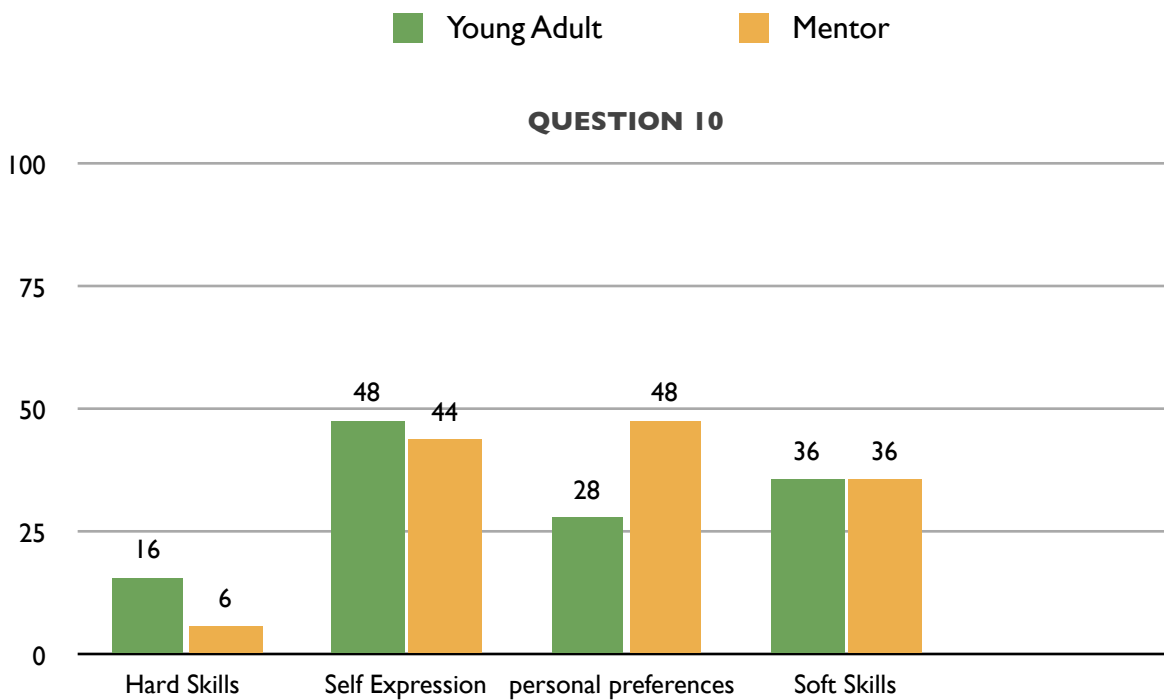
YA = 25 M= 25 Q 7: How much do you think it matters that you have a manager or coworkers who understand your strengths and capabilities as well as your challenges on a job or in a career?



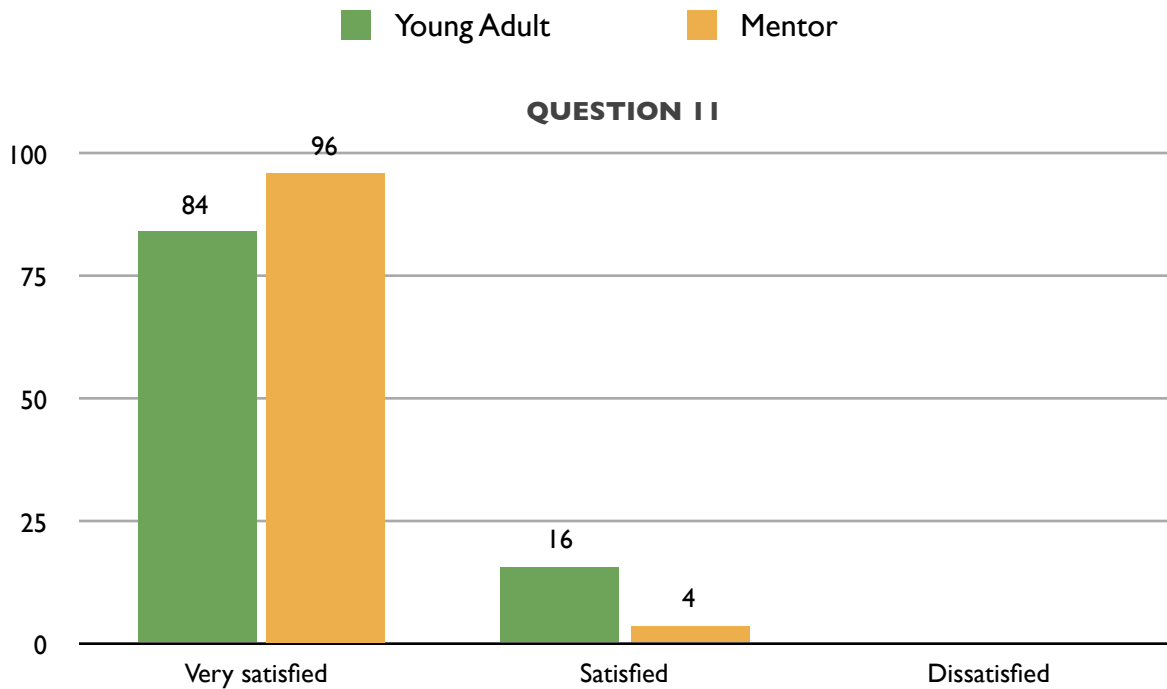
YA = 25 M= 25 Q 8: How much do you think it matters that you are able to get along with and communicate effectively with your manager or coworkers on a job or in a career?



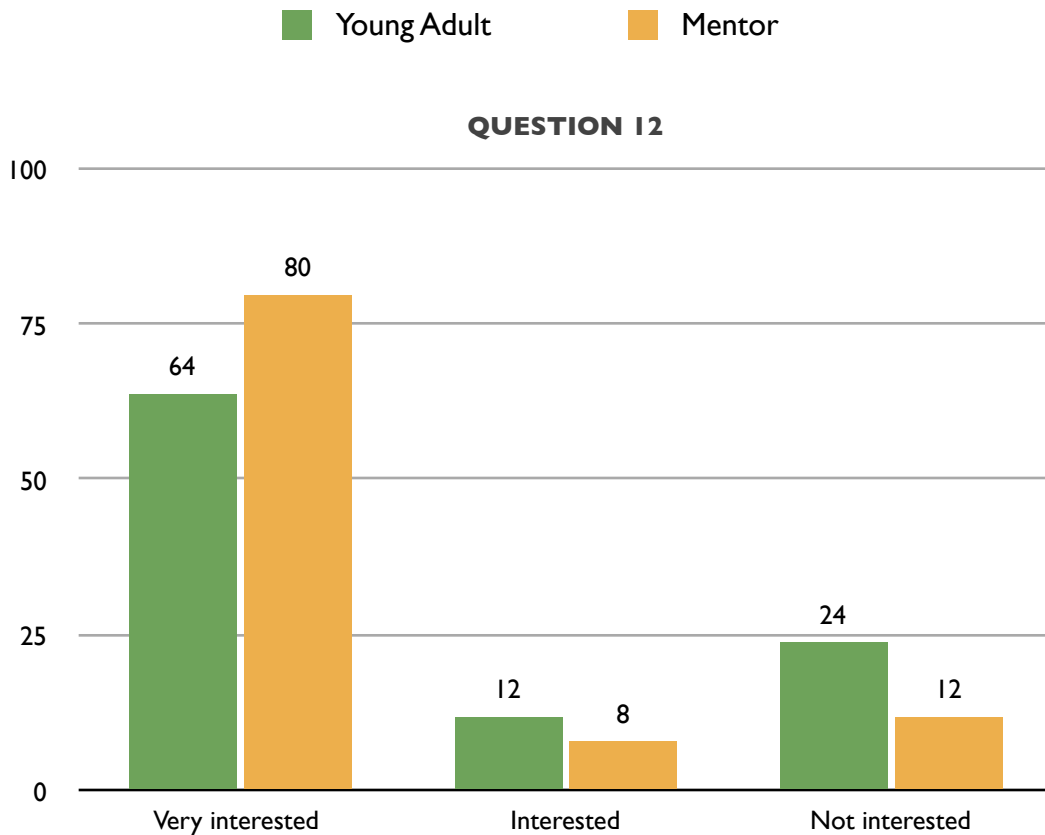
YA = 25 M= 25 Q 9: What areas have been **mostly** part of your training or education for a job or career? a. Hard Skills, teachable abilities, b. physical self expression, art, c. learning patterns and preferences, d. soft skills (emotional capabilities)



YA = 25 M= 25 Q 10: What areas have been **least** part of your training or education for a career?



YA = 25 M= 25 Q 11 How satisfied were you that this tool highlighted your best strengths?



YA = 25 M= 25 Q- 12: How interested are you in attending a workshop with others to learn more about how to use your best strengths so you can do your best on a job or in a career you want to have?



# APPENDIX C

## The Strength and Career Index Findings:

### Two Profiles

#### **Profile: Sarah**

Sarah is a 19 year old young woman who wants to go to college. Hannah wrote me. She said she suffered throughout her teen years with anxiety and depression. She expressed that she lacked confidence yet has pushed herself to get through the first year of college course work. Sarah has a deep passion for acting and the theater. She often questioned herself about a specific career that she enjoy no matter her social anxiety. She wanted to take the MSCI strengths and career assessment to see what strengths it might show and career possibilities. Her printout report is reduced to visual images.

#### **Profile: Trent**

Trent is 39 year old man with autism. His strengths from the Index are noted from his past experiences using the principals in the S.A.F.E.T.Y. WORKS Model

# Marquette Strengths and Career Index, Hard Skills

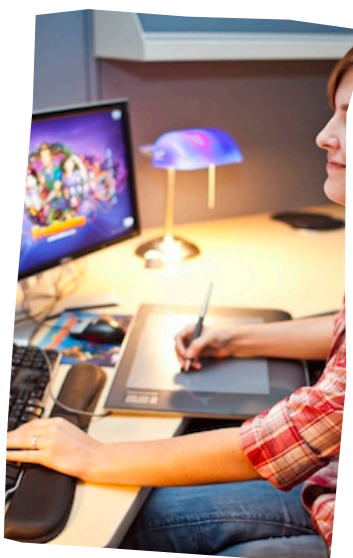
Sarah



Sales manager for a toy store



Automotive Mechanics



Game Developer



Human Rights Advocate



Blogger to guide tween girls: safety, protection against bullying, self worth, and positive affirmations.



Volunteer: Campaign she supports

**Sarah**

Marquette Strengths and Career Index  
Self Expression



Theater: Actor

Story  
Teller



Singer



Photographer



Blogger for tween girls: safety  
against bullying, self worth



Theater: Costume Designer



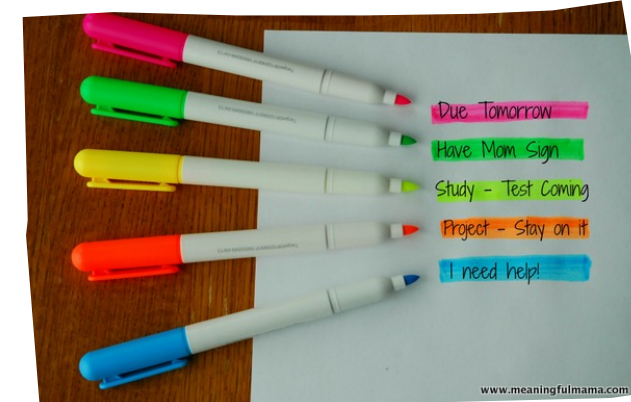
# Sarah

## Marquette Strengths and Career Index

### Personal Preferences



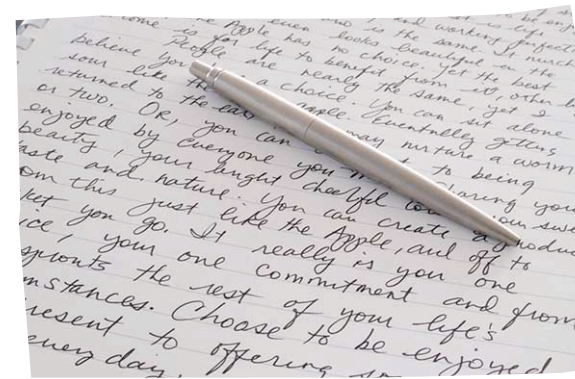
**Motivation to Achieve:** Seeks a College Degree



**Patterns in Learning:** Color Coding, using I-Pad and I phone



**Structure and Environments:** Quiet Settings, Work Indoors



**Patterns in Learning:** Journal Writing: Does Self Talk to Ease Stress



**Environments, People, Structure:** Small group of coworkers



**Patterns in Learning:** Likes to Watch a Video



**Connected to Others:** Relies on Someone to Have Her Back in Difficult or Confusing Situations



# Marquette Strengths and Career Index

## Sarah



**Self Emotional Awareness:** Gather information before making a decision.



**Self Confidence:** You say yes to a good opportunity that can positively effect



**Initiative:** You explore, study, or read about careers you are interested in.

Flexibility  
&  
Adaptability  
to Change



**Adaptability:** You find other ways to solve a problem.

**Building Bonds:** You show gratitude when your teacher or supervisor grants you a favor.



**Political Group Awareness:** You see yourself interested in working for a cause you care deeply about.



**Empathy:** You listen to a friend's talk about their difficult situation.



**Trustworthiness:** You help someone who relies on your assistance.



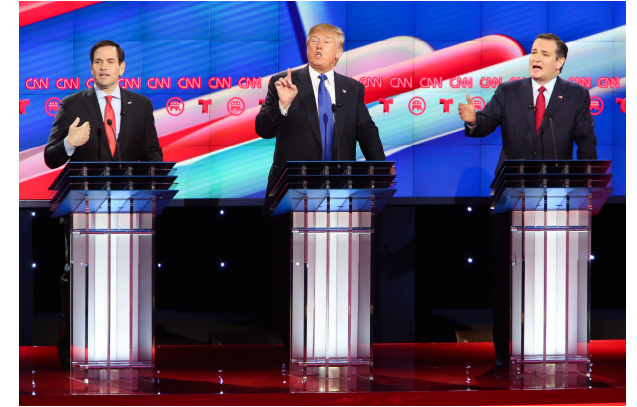
**Service Orientation:** You can convince someone with reasons why to buy something.



# Marquette Strengths and Career Index

Hard Skill Ability

## Trent



Enjoys watching political debates on TV



Worked at Meijer for 11 years



Worked in Pets Department  
Cared for Pets



Worked in Lawn and Garden

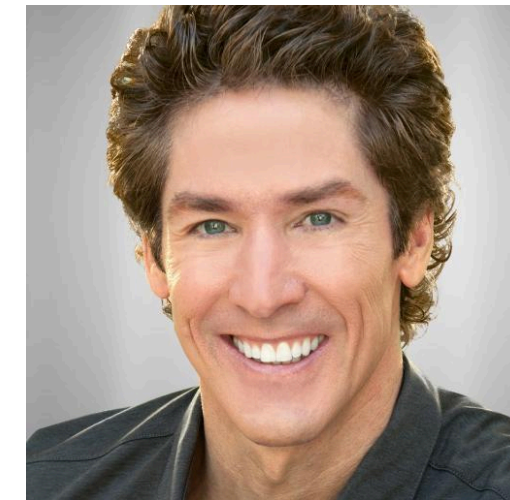


Stocked Shelves

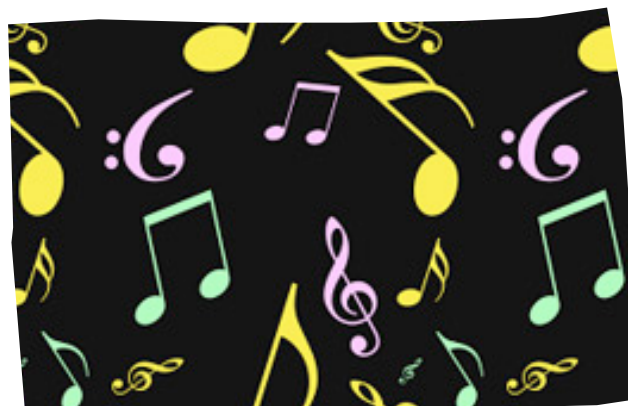


# Trent

## Marquette Strengths and Career Index Self Exp



Trent enjoys watching Joel Osteen. Shows interest in spirituality, faith and a sense of purpose.



Enjoys music of all kinds, and loves to paint to Gloria Estefan

Trent has Visual Spatial Ability and is an Abstract Artist



When he trusts someone, he feels connected and responds well.



Let goes of anger and forgives.



# Trent

## Marquette Strengths and Career Index Personal Preferences

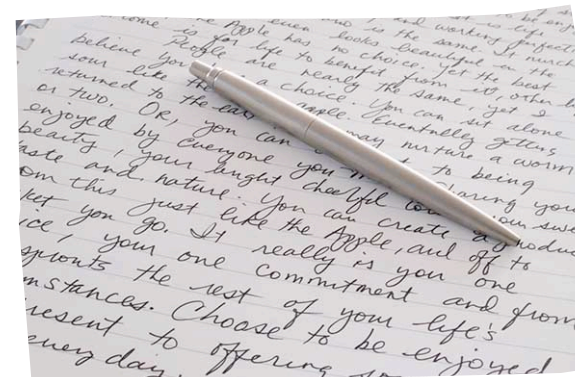


**EASY GOING**

Trent is most effective when he has an easy pace and flow to his day, event, or activity.



**Patterns in Learning:** Trent uses check lists, I-Pad and I phone for visual images that helps facilitate understanding.



**Structure and Environments:** Trent responds best in quiet settings, prefers working indoors

**Patterns in Learning:** Trent writes: to understand and know what to predict about an event or day. He wants to know his part.

**Environments, People, Structure:** Trent prefers working around a small group of coworkers.

SUN	MO	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SATU
today's goals	today's goals	today's goals	today's goals	today's goals	today's goals	today's goals
schedule a.m.	schedule a.m.	schedule a.m.	schedule a.m.	schedule a.m.	schedule a.m.	schedule a.m.
noon	noon	noon	noon	noon	noon	noon
p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.

**Patterns in Learning:** Trent relies upon a weekly Calendar of Events



**Patterns in Learning:** Enjoys watching a video to learn and understand something new. Flying in an airplane, going to NYC



**Connected to Others:** Trent relies on Someone to Have Her Back in Difficult or Confusing Situations



# Trent

## Marquette Strengths and Career Index Self Emotional Awareness



**Self Emotional Awareness:** Chooses to eat nutritious meals.



**Self Emotional Awareness:** Prepares packets of his supplements and takes independently.



**Self Emotional Awareness:** Has good hygiene.



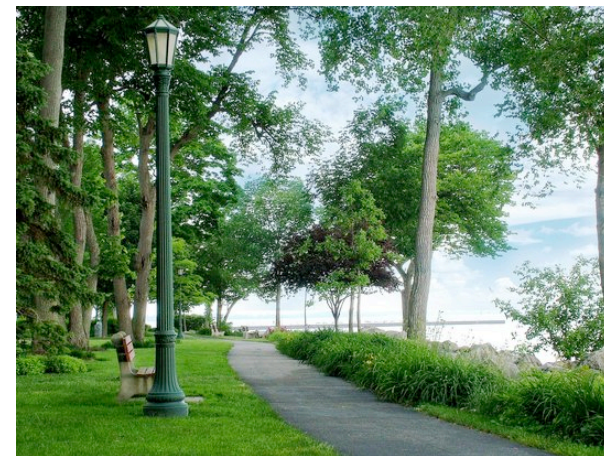
**Self Emotional Awareness:** Finds purpose in celebrating holidays with family and his art success.



**Self Emotional Awareness:** Finds respite in swinging on the porch or resting for 1/2 hour in room.



**Self Emotional Awareness:** Finds enjoyment in riding a bike.  
Trustworthiness: You help someone who relies on your assistance.



**Self Emotional Awareness:** Finds enjoyment in walking in parks, etc.



**Self Emotional Awareness:** Finds enjoyment on the beach and at the ocean. Likes to paint on the beach.

# APPENDIX D

## **Nine Power Practices that Move Students from the Index Findings to Action**



# NINE POWER PRACTICES FOR CAREER EXPLORATION AND STRENGTH DEVELOPMENT! BE YOUR OWN TURN AROUND SPECIALIST!

[www.marquettestrengthsindex.com](http://www.marquettestrengthsindex.com)

**Congratulations to You!** You made the first step in career preparation by taking the Marquette Strengths and Career Index©. You now have a list of career options that match your strengths.

**Next, start preparing and building your on-the-job capabilities with these Power Practices (PP). There are nine Power Practices to get you started. DON'T WORRY YOU WILL BE GUIDED!**

**PP1: You are the best solution to career success and life goals.** Start moving toward your career options from the findings in hard skill strengths. Here are simple steps.

*Continued on Page 2*

**PP2 Explore and experience your career options and strengths in Self Expression and Personal Preferences.**

*Continued on Page 3*

**PP3: Be aware and develop your Emotional Strengths - Why?** Because managing your emotions are key to your success and emotions drive everything you do.

*Continued on Page 4*

**PP6 - 9: Powerful Truths You Never Want to Forget:**

Schools and other educational programs rarely focus on building emotional strengths (soft skills). Don't allow your emotions to get out of control. Listen to your emotions. Take charge and learn how you can make a positive difference in interactions, self advocacy, and motivation.

*Continued on Page 5*



*Rhonus tempor placcat.*



**Power Practices: You are the best solution to your career and life goals.**

## PP1: Your Hard Skill Strengths

**Begin today. Use your findings from the [marquettestrengthsindex.com](http://marquettestrengthsindex.com) in these simple steps.** On a sheet of paper or on your computer, record the career options from your findings. Consider some of these possibilities. Not every option is just for you, but who knows you find one you really find interesting. Do your homework, read on the internet about the career options that appeal to you. Keep a journal. Write about the positive aspects of the specific career you like.

From your Hard Skill strengths, choose some of your best strengths or Interests you have about work or a career. List them.

**Next, explore your best strengths.** Let me give you an example. We generally think of using hard skills in the classroom, such as writing a critique, interpreting scientific diagrams, solving mathematic operations. Yet, you can pursue your interest and development in hard skills beyond the classroom. For example, if you selected that you enjoyed studying about plant life, you may want to extend your experience to gardening or working with plants

and flowers. Go outdoors, find an area to plant a garden.

Choose vegetable seeds you want to eat or plants that beautify your lawn. Perhaps you can explore work or careers that involve plant life. There are many options on many different levels of education, from high school diploma, to certification, to obtaining a college degree, to studying plant life. The important thing is to start where you are to develop a strength. Note how you feel when you are doing what inspires you.



*Horticulture Engineer*

Take a field trip out to see job shadow people who have a job that you think you want.

- Was the activity challenging? or Easy?
- Was your focus strong on this activity?
- Did time pass quickly?
- Did you lose your sense of self during the activity?

Write in your journal about your experiences and goals to find a career or a job with plant life. Seek support from people who can connect you to new opportunities for education, developing strengths, and getting into your chosen career.

*Turn  
Your  
Situation  
Around*

## PP2: Your Self Expression

Select one or more of careers from your findings. List careers or options that seem



interesting. Read about the ones you selected. Write in your journal

the things you like about the option.

Next write about how you might experience your strengths. For example: if you are good at drawing, choose someone or something to draw. You may draw something abstract in pen and ink or you might go outdoors and find an interesting object of nature. Find something that inspires you, has beauty, or has meaning. Maybe you see a blue jay sitting on the mailbox and it has flown to your backyard tree to build a nest. Draw what you see, notice how you feel. Then write about your experience in a journal.

How did you feel before, during, and after you took part in drawing?

Was the activity challenging? Easy?

Did time pass quickly?

Did you lose your sense of self during the activity?

Then write about your experience in a journal. Try choosing one of your strengths each day and ask yourself these questions.



## PP3: Your Personal Preferences



From your Personal Preference findings, write about

the strengths that make you feel most comfortable in your own skin. These are keys to having satisfaction and being effective in work tasks. Essentially these enable you to participate, adapt, and be your best you.

1. Look at the personal preference strengths you selected.
2. Consider strengths that are most important to you. Does your personal preference
  - a. enhance your focus during a task?
  - b. increase your overall productivity?
  - c. provide greater ease at work.
  - d. assist in connecting you to others
  - e. enhance your community adaptation?

I offer here some personal preference examples:

- a. You are more likely to feel that you can focus when the lighting is low or dim.
- b. You are more likely to feel you are productive when working in a quiet area.
- c. You are more likely to feel greater ease when working with a few coworkers instead of a large group?
- d. You are more likely to be content and at ease when you have a routine or structure at work.
- e. Job expectations are clear to you.



*Prefers to work in areas without noise*



## PP4: Your Emotional Strengths



**Emotional strengths can greatly enhance your work effectiveness.** How? Because your emotions drive everything you do. When you are self aware of your emotional strengths, you can enhance your adaptability and turn less desired situations into better situations for you.

**Secondly, knowing your emotional strengths, use them to** guide you through challenging situations. These strengths are also also known as soft skills and they are not easy for any of us to develop. Yet, these skills often require focus and effort to develop.

**Your anxiety may increase around certain coworkers or your boss. But don't worry, you can make a positive choice to manage. do something positive to manage. Here are some examples.**

### The Rude Dude

Lets say a coworker comments something negative about the boss, and in your mind his comment is rude and ridiculous. You think your coworker is rude and lazy. You decide to hold back a rude comment you want to say. You do this although you had the urge to blurt it out. Congratulate yourself. Using your strength may keep you from spoiling work relationships, which in turn will help you have an agreeable presence with coworkers too. While it may be difficult to hold back your comments to another person's rudeness and biases, understand you are using a skill to

maintain positive connections with others. Sometimes it isn't worth arguing with someone when they are rude. Minding your own business is the key.

### The Perfumed Sally

Lets say that a coworker wears a strong perfume which smells horrible and causes you to sneeze over and over again. You are very sensitive to strong perfume. You decided to express to Sally how bad the perfume smells, yet you know your comment would appear rude to Sally. So you do the right thing and you keep the rude thought to yourself. This is good. But go one step further, solve the problem. First, try and find one or two good qualities she may have. She may be friendly with a soft easy speaking voice, making it easy for you to approach her to ask a question or communicate about a task on the job. Secondly, because you must work close to her for most of the day, enduring her strong perfume isn't the right solution for you. Find a time to talk with her. Approach her with ease explaining how allergic you are to her perfume. She may be understanding and stop wearing it. Your emotional strength in approaching her in a calm manner could be the solution. Using your emotional strength to solve the situation with ease reveals your ability to use emotional intelligence in the work place.

### The Blatant Gossiper

A person who gossips about other coworkers can bring uneasy feelings. Gossipers make people feel like they are

Emotions  
drive  
everything  
you  
do.

## Your Emotional Strengths, cont.

in quicksand. Realize you do have it in your power to turn around the situation. First, don't allow yourself to be a target. Your gut feeling may be telling you to keep your distance from a gossip. This is a time to define clear boundaries. When a coworker gossips, try these 4 things. 1) Keep emphasizing that you have work to do. 2) If that doesn't work, redirect the conversation to an end. 3) If she still continues to gossip around you, avoid her. 4) Don't over react. When taking these steps, you respond on your own behalf and this makes you emotionally strong. Your feelings can be your best guide in navigating situations at work, school, or in your career.

### **PP5:** Your Emotional Strengths

#### Activity to Try

Reflect on your personal and social interactions. Are you satisfied with them? Or would you like to have better interactions with others? You may have many interactions during the day, at home, school, work, and in the community. Try this. Later when you are in a quiet place or at home, you might write in your career journal your thoughts and feelings. Consider the people you were around and the thoughts you had about them. This is the time when it is alright to write your true feelings about someone. If you have negative feelings about someone write them in your journal. The next step may be more difficult, but do your best. Write at least one positive quality about them. This may shift your perception a bit which could allow improved interactions with them in the future.

## Powerful Truths You Never Want to Forget

**PP6:** Develop the best strengths that you have within you. You can't give to your career or job what you don't have inside. Being effective on a job or in your career is dependent upon you building your strengths. Practice and watch how things positively change.

**PP7:** **Your emotions drive every thing you do.** Your school and other educational settings may not focus on building emotional strengths (soft skills). Don't allow your emotions to get out of control. Sit still and just listen to your emotions. Practice and learn how to better use soft skills. They make all the difference in making you a good applicant for work or to maintain your career. Without emotional strengths, you may be turned down from promotions, or may lose your job.

**PP8:** Continue practicing your strengths. Keep a career journal on your performance, note your positive interactions with others. Also, look at interactions that go wrong. Afterwards, ask yourself if you did your best. Recognize how you feel when you are effective. This is an accomplishment. Practice your strengths in safe settings with people who know you well.

**PP9:** **Lastly, use your strengths whenever you can.** There are many examples, but one includes during an interview. Before you interview for a job, list your strengths. Tell the interviewer about your strengths in hard skills, self expression, personal preferences, and emotional skills. The interviewer will be impressed that

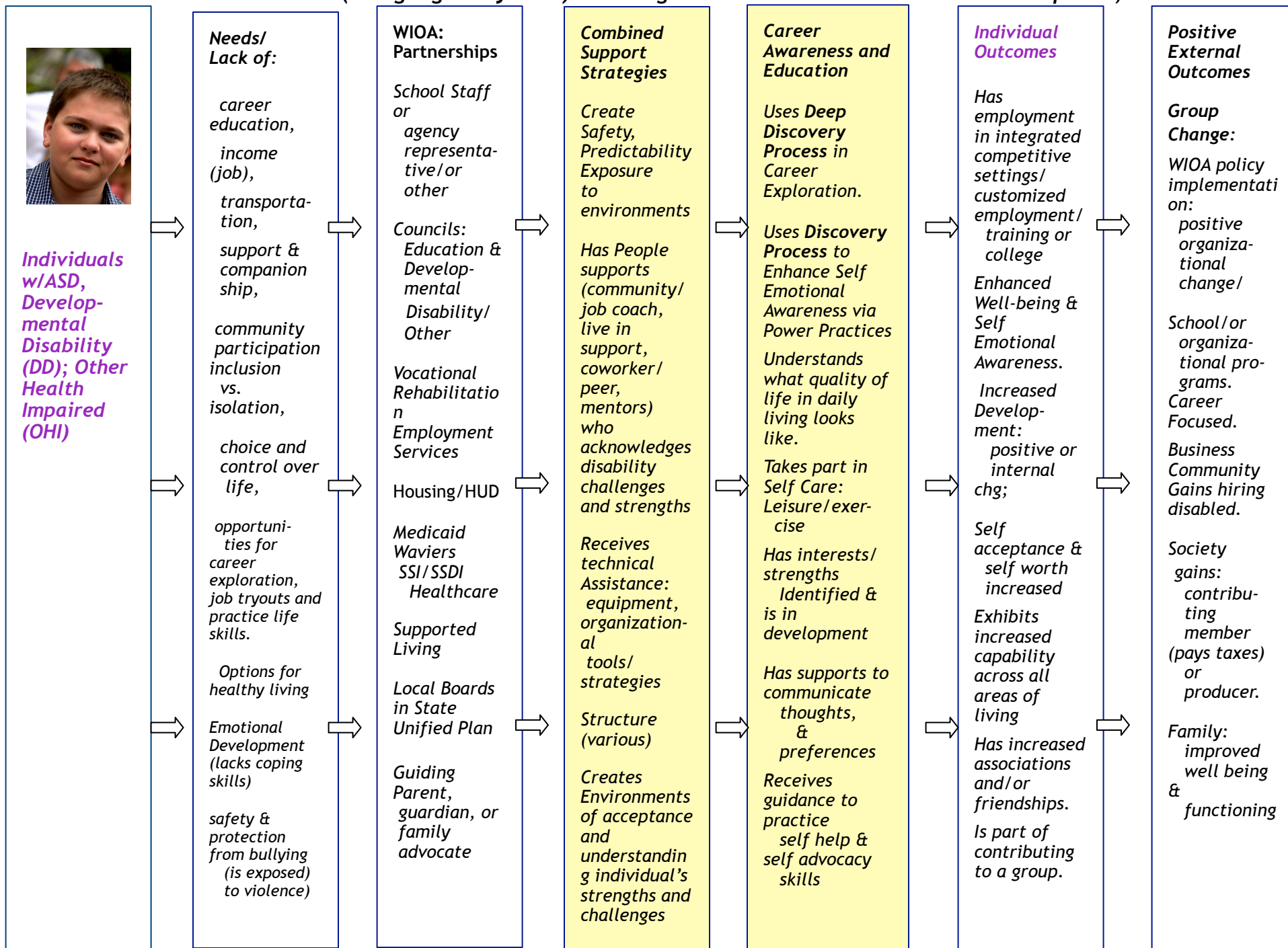
you have taken a self assessment to determine your strengths. Furthermore the interviewer will be interested that you have been developing your strengths too. When interviewing for a job, you have to be proactive and point out to people all of your best strengths that apply. Remember you must point them out if you want the interviewer to see your strengths. Who knows you may get the job or the promotion.



# APPENDIX E

## **S.A.F.E.T.Y. WORKS Model**

**S.A.F.E.T.Y. WORKS (in highlighted yellow): A Strength and Career Model © Jackie M. Marquette, Ph.D.**



# APPENDIX F

## Testimonials

TESTIMONIALS  
Individuals who Experienced taking the  
Marquette Strengths and Career Index (MSCI)  
Jackie M. Marquette Ph.D.

- 1. University Graduate Students Who are Special Education Teachers**
- 2. Special Education Teachers and Administrators**
- 3. A Licensed psychologist and a certified school psychologist in Pennsylvania**
- 4. Nursing Student**
- 5. Parents with son or daughter with ASD**
- 6. Individuals with ASD/Other Health Impaired**

=====

**1. University Graduate Students Who are Special Education Teachers**

First, I wanted to thank you for the opportunity to utilize your index for our graduate class. It was very educational and informative and I am very appreciative.  
RK

“I believe your assessment would be great to administer to Sophomores in high school in order to guide them to a career they may enjoy and help them focus on choosing a major and then a college. What a wonderful tool and I hope my son seriously considers the results of his career index when choosing a major in college and then his career. Thank you for your time and letting our class take your career index.”

Best,  
K. Michalski  
Special Education Middle School Mathematic teacher.

“I am a graduate student and special education teacher. I wanted to thank you for sharing the index with us., It was a great experience for me and the student that took it. She really enjoyed getting the results since she is trying to decide if she wants to go to a specialized arts high school next year.”

The student is a 14 year old female.  
Sincerely,

Elizabeth G.

I chose a special education student to take your assessment. I found the findings to be 'spot on'  
Thank you for allowing our class to take your career assessment  
N.P.

**2. Special Education Teachers and Administrators**

I highly recommend Marquette Strength Index Career Assessment tool. It is modern and informal in the sense that it does not lead to a test score but provides insuperable data that is utilized for career decisions based on personal interest inventory.

Dr. Marquette has developed this tool as a means for parents and teachers to eliminate the guess work that revolves around determining strengths that one possess in a specific area that could lead to a successful and happy career.

**Patricia McCreary**  
**IND Teacher/Specialist**  
**Retired.**

What I like about this [the Marquette Strengths and Career Index, MSCI] is that it does career exploration and makes suggestions for each level of educational abilities. It is similar to the tool used by all middle and high schoolers in the state of Kentucky Individual Learning Plan or ILP. This [MSCI] is better because it is easier to navigate, and interpret. Young adults will find the graphics and user-friendly interface appealing.

It [MSCI] does a really good job of exploring interests that are non-paid hobbies or very satisfying pursuits. It [MSCI] gives examples of how one may find more information about them. Most of us have interests that will never become a paying job but we can gain great enjoyment from and they can become important parts of our lives. That part of our lives is so important in connecting with our world and ourselves.

I like the fact that you [Dr. Jackie Marquette] consulted with families and individuals in its development and made it a strength based assessment rather than needs based.

This [MSCI] is a post-secondary assessment that a young person can relate to. This speaks to young adults and meets them where they are. I think a young adult who is trying to find his/her niche in the world could definitely receive valuable guidance with this tool.

**Pam Harlow**  
**NBCT Exceptional Needs Specialist**  
**Transition teacher, Nelson County Schools**

### **3. A Licensed psychologist and a certified school psychologist in Pennsylvania**

“Thanks so much for sharing this tool with me..... The depth and breadth of the assessment you created is impressive and should be helpful to anyone who is in need of some external guidance as to career planning. Certainly, it should be required for use in “transition planning” for children between 16 and 18 as they prepare to leave the school world for the world of work.”

**Steve Kossor**

**Steve Kossor is the Founder and Executive Director of the Institute for Behavior Change. He is a licensed psychologist and a certified school psychologist in Pennsylvania with over 30 years of experience. He has been recognized by the US Congress, both houses of the Pennsylvania legislature, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and by the President’s New Freedom Commission on the Mental Health for his visionary leadership in the creation of a successful community-based treatment model for children with serious mental illness symptoms.**

### **4. Nursing Student**

“Yes the options did match my interests! I thought they were very on point and even gave me some options I had not considered before but agreed with. Thanks for letting me take it!”

A nursing student  
KKlosterman

### **5. Parents with son or daughter with ASD**

“Your index suggested that my son pursue many career options which included occupational therapist, plumbing and vet tech. I was amazed because these are the exact jobs that I know that my son would be excellent in doing. I found your index was very interesting and my son, age 14 years 11 months, enjoyed taking the assessment. Thank you for allowing my son to take your assessment. It was very interesting.

Best,  
K. M.

I have two 25 year old sons who are twins and both have autism.

I realized through taking the assessment that I am going to look more in depth at self employment for both of my guys. Not only will this give them a sense of self worth but teach valuable job skills for future public employment.

Nicholas likes to be active and on the go. I plan to research how to create a vending machine business or a document shredding business.

However, Lucas enjoys a routine, quiet settings, and structured type activities. I can see him possibly cleaning offices after hours. Or I could help them start a small business where they could sell Autism Awareness/Disability Awareness products. This would also promote self-advocacy.

The assessment gave me ideas to create volunteer opportunities also. I think volunteer work is very important. The boys enjoy thrift stores, so we can look for gently used stuffed animals to donate to homeless shelters, the soup kitchen, housing authority, or even the police station. It may help Nick and Luke demonstrate their character and commitment to the welfare of their community. It also shows that they like to be around people and to help others.

It [MSCI] really got me thinking about issues they need to work on!

Definitely, I want to work on empathy, especially for Lucas. I noticed that their emotional areas need to be increased, like saying hello/goodbye without prompting, holding door for others, helping others in small ways. My guys can do all these things, but rely on prompts.

I really liked the strengths and career assessment.

**Donna L.**  
**Parent of adult twin sons with autism**

## **6. Individuals with ASD/Other Health Impaired**

“Helping people to find the right career is really important. Finding a career that used my abilities in visual thinking and art helped me to be successful. The most successful career uses a person’s strengths.”

**~Temple Grandin**

Before meeting Mrs. Marquette I was unaware that any kind of aptitude or strength test like this existed. As a young person who suffers from anxiety and depression I have often wondered what the world had in store for me and if I could find a career that I could enjoy despite my social anxiety. No one ever told me that I had any kind of social anxiety issues, I had to figure that out on my own. Outside of therapy for depression I had little experience with the clinical and the academic world surrounding mental health issues.

Upon meeting Mrs. Marquette and getting to know more about her findings, and teachings, I learned that she wanted to offer individuals struggling with an array of mental health issues, a way to assess themselves and find strength in their skills. I was a bit hesitant to take this test at first, if only because every other test like this usually came with a ‘diagnosis’ and socially negative connotations.

I found it so comforting that in many ways she was stepping back from clinical models of dealing with mental health. Life is messy, every single person is different, and with the Marquette Strength Index any individual can take this assessment and come out a better person with a stronger handle on what they excel in and how these skills can lead to meaningful fulfilling careers.

**Hannah Brookes**

**23 year old College Graduate**

<https://www.facebook.com/MarquetteStrengthIndex/posts/1597816650538820>

[Amy Leigh McCorkle](#) to Marquette Strength Index for Careers with Dr. Jacque March 6 at 1:04pm · Mount Washington, KY, United States ·

The Marquette Strengths Index is an invaluable tool to point one in the right direction of possible career choices. It shows your various strengths and skills. This is essential in exploring career options as it will show where one can thrive and live and go beyond the simple act of surviving day by day.–

**Amy McCorkle**

**Award Winning and Bestselling Author, Blogger, Screenwriter and Filmmaker Amy McCorkle**

An AS person can be steered into an appropriate career choice considering the personal strengths that can be applied and the deficiencies that must be counter-measured.

What can never be controlled beyond the point of hiring is what kind of entourage does the employer have. Are the staff and management versed in disabilities and does the employer uphold an anti-bullying stance, or is the employer a relic of some bygone era? Sad but true, hate and intolerance still reign supreme in more workplaces than I care to admit.

Besides finding the ideal career choice I would advocate any and every Aspie to explore and possibly develop an entrepreneurial side if not already there.

Get on it [MSCI] while you're still in school and/or still young. It is an important survival tool in the kind of environment we all know so well.

Good luck all and God Bless

**James Cook**

**Artist**