

# Ready for the Workplace Cards

Q & A cards to promote social and emotional workplace readiness for young people with ASD



This set of 48 cards is designed to be used with other vocational training materials accessible [here](#). For detailed instructions on how to use each of the six card categories, and to access a separate file allowing you to display the cards one at a time on your computer, tablet or phone, click [here](#).

Print out the cards on cardstock or on paper that you will laminate.

The cards are in numbered categories. For a game-like element, you can roll a die to determine which cards participants have to select and answer.

The first six cards are quick references to help the facilitator explain the cards and use them effectively.

I hope this resource is useful for you and the young people you are helping.

Joel Shaul, LCSW

The first set of six cards  
is for the teacher/therapist/facilitator.

Keep these handy for tips on how to lead the  
participants in using the different  
card varieties.



## ◆ ABOUT YOU ◆

### **Suggestions to the facilitator:**

This category of cards is to encourage participants to reveal their own knowledge, thoughts and feelings about employment. Here is some suggested language for introducing the "About You" cards:

*"The other participants in this card activity might reveal interesting and important facts about themselves. Be sure to listen closely and encourage them."*



## ◆ ABOUT OTHERS ◆

### **Suggestions to the facilitator:**

The young people using these cards might find it difficult to imagine the thoughts and reactions of other people. To encourage consideration of others' needs and points of view, consider saying something like:

*"As you begin to make decisions about working, it is important to imagine other people's thoughts and feelings. These cards are to help you become more aware of other people's needs and points of view."*





## ◆ ABOUT THE FUTURE ◆

### **Suggestions to the facilitator:**

Participants using these cards might be affected by apprehension, a lack of practical knowledge, or fantasy thinking. Here is some suggested language for introducing them:

*"These 'About the Future' cards are to help you imagine what it might be like to work in the future. People planning for the future should try to think in a positive and practical manner."*



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## ◆ HELP THE PERSON ◆

### **Suggestions to the facilitator:**

*One good way to facilitate the use of the "Help the Person" cards is for you to play the role of the person described in the card.*

*Then, the participant(s) can offer advice while you remain in character.*



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## ◆ FIX THE THOUGHT ◆

### **Suggestions to the facilitator:**

*Here is a good way to explore the "Fix the Thought" cards.*

*You, the facilitator, can hold the card over your head, and say, "Let's say I am a young adult having this thought. If I were a friend of yours, how could you help me to find a more useful way of thinking?"*



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## ◆ ACT IT OUT ◆

### **Suggestions to the facilitator:**

When carrying out the role plays in the "Act it Out" cards, your role as facilitator is to set a strong example by putting dramatic energy into your own role enactments.



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## ◆ ABOUT YOU ◆

Aside from schoolwork or chores at home, what other kinds of work have you had the chance to try?

Any volunteer work?

Any paid work?



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## ◆ ABOUT YOU ◆

When people have their first jobs, things can be hard, especially at first. Which of these challenges do you think might affect you the most?

\*Getting tired

\*Unpleasant sounds or smells

\*Change in your routine

\*Wanting to be home

\*Doing work you don't like

How might you cope with these hard parts of working?



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## ◆ ABOUT YOU ◆

Some people have disabilities that make them unable to have jobs. It's not their fault they can't work. They can have lives as good as people who do work. Still, there are other disabled people who have found ways to do good and important work.

Describe somehow you know, or have learned about, who has been able to be employed in some kind of work even though they have a mental or physical disability of some kind.



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## ◆ ABOUT YOU ◆

Tell about a time when you were learning something at school that was very difficult, but with hard work and practice you got better at it.

When you eventually have a job, do you think this same kind of thing could happen?



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## ◆ ABOUT YOU ◆

What is something you know how to do that could possibly become a job skill someday?

How did you learn it?



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## ◆ ABOUT YOU ◆

Do you have any special needs that could affect you in the workplace? What might you be able to do to deal with those special needs while at work?

What kinds of things might an employer be able to do to help you deal with that special need?



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## ◆ ABOUT YOU ◆

All children think about fun and cool kinds of work they might do when they grow up. All grown-ups learn that almost no one gets anything like a "dream job," especially at first. Over the years, what have been your "dream jobs?"

Ask others reading these cards with you which of your career ideas seem practical and which are not very practical.



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## ◆ ABOUT YOU ◆

When you are doing standing-up, physical work, which part of you gets the most tired?

Legs?  
Arms?  
Overall level of energy?

For people who do physical, standing-up work, how do they deal with this?

If you also end up doing some standing-up, physical work, how might you cope with feeling tired?



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## ◆ ABOUT OTHERS ◆

Imagine that two of your school teachers or college teachers are having a conversation about you.

They are talking about things they think you *might be good at* in a part-time job.

What do you think they might be saying about you?



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## ◆ ABOUT OTHERS ◆

In the workplace, everyone learns about bosses. Almost everyone has bosses, supervisors and managers - often many of them.

1. Describe all the levels of bosses in a school.
2. Ask the adult with you to describe the levels of bosses in some other organization.



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## ◆ ABOUT OTHERS ◆

Imagine a time in the future when you are 25 years old.

Let's say at that time you are still living at home and not attending school. You are working 20 hours a week in a paid or volunteer job.

Describe some ways that your having a job could be good for your parents or for other people living in your household.



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## ◆ ABOUT OTHERS ◆

Is there anyone who underestimates your ability to have a job, who has doubts about your chance of success in a career, or discourages you from trying to work?

Is there anyone who overestimates your ability to work, pushes you too hard to work, or seems to expect too much out of you?



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## ◆ ABOUT OTHERS ◆

Volunteer jobs are jobs in which people work for free, often to help other people. Many people volunteer a lot. For some people, that is their main kind of work.

Volunteer jobs are good. Lots of work done by volunteers is important.

Ask the adult with you, or other people present, to describe a few examples of volunteer work.



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## ◆ ABOUT OTHERS ◆

If you are doing this card activity with other young people, ask one of them these questions:

*"What is something you are looking forward to about working?"*

*"What are you NOT looking forward to about working?"*



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## ◆ ABOUT OTHERS ◆

Is it hard to be a boss?

Ask others with you (and yourself): *Which of these things are the very hardest parts about being a boss?*

\*Dealing with absent employees and filling the schedule if someone can't come to work.

\*Dealing with an employee who is not doing good work.

\*Satisfying *their own* boss.



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## ◆ ABOUT OTHERS ◆

Ask other people with you (and yourself): *Which of these things are important to you about having a job?"*

\*Earn money.

\*Do something you're good at.

\*Learn some new skills.

\*Meet people. Maybe make friends.

\*Not be stuck at home, bored.



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## ◆ ABOUT THE FUTURE ◆

Imagine you are 40 years old.

You are telling a group of teenagers about your first part-time job when you were much younger. Please complete these sentences:

*"To learn the names of my co-workers, I \_\_\_\_\_."*

*"When I wasn't sure how to do something, I asked my \_\_\_\_\_ and my \_\_\_\_\_."*

*"When I managed to get through my first week of work, I felt very \_\_\_\_\_."*



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## ◆ ABOUT THE FUTURE ◆

Imagine working in the future when you are:

\*20 years old

\*30 years old

\*40 years old

What things about work do you imagine will get easier for you as time goes on?

What things do you imagine will continue to be tough, even after many years?



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## ◆ ABOUT THE FUTURE ◆

Most people don't get to do their favorite work activities on the job. Most people end up doing something less interesting or fun in the workplace.

In the future, if you don't get to do your favorite work as part of your job, what are some ways you might do that special work on your own, at home, in your spare time?



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## ◆ ABOUT THE FUTURE ◆

After you have been working for a while, which of these good things do you think you might feel?

\*Part of the world of grown-ups

\*Proud to be employed

\*Glad to be out of the house more

\*Pleased to be earning some money



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## ◆ ABOUT THE FUTURE ◆

Imagine you are much, much older, and retired now, after having worked for many years.

You decide to make a YouTube video about your years of working!

\*When telling the story of your working life in this video, what would be the happy part?

\*When telling the story of your working life, what would be the part about frustration and struggles that you somehow got through?



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## ◆ ABOUT THE FUTURE ◆

In the future, if you have a job that pays money, what will you do with the money?

\*About how much of the money would go for things you "need" instead of "want" or "like"?

\*What are some expenses you might be expected to pay for living costs (housing, food, electricity, Wi-Fi, transportation, etc.)?



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## ◆ ABOUT THE FUTURE ◆

Imagine that your 60-year-old self has travelled back in time to offer advice and encouragement to your present-day self!

Complete these sentences:

"Present-day self: To get ready for working, I need you to \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_!"

"Present-day self: When you feel discouraged at work, please remember to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_."



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## ◆ ABOUT THE FUTURE ◆

Imagine that some future co-workers are talking about you on your day off when you aren't there. What might they be saying?

Using your imagination, finish these sentences:

"Over the past couple years, this person has gradually gotten better at \_\_\_\_\_."

"Something I like about \_\_\_\_\_ is that they are really \_\_\_\_\_."



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## ◆ HELP THE PERSON ◆

Amber got some good job training in high school and she had been really looking forward to having a job. But in Amber's small town, there are very few jobs available. Because of that, Amber has no job at all for now.

Amber's therapist tells her about volunteer jobs. But Amber feels disappointed! She says, "I don't want a *pretend job* that does not even pay money!



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## ◆ HELP THE PERSON ◆

Ever since Joseph finished high school, he has been having his lunch every day right at noon. That makes him feel organized and keeps him relaxed. Now, at his part-time job, they just moved all the employee lunch breaks to *10:55 am!*

He asks his boss if the break could be switched back to noon. She says no. Joseph tells his father that he can't stand this change and that he will need to find a new job because of it.



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## ◆ HELP THE PERSON ◆

When Paul took part in his training to run the dishwashing machine at the restaurant, it was hard to get used to the sound of the machine. Eventually he got so he could stand it. But one day Paul comes to work and there is a *new* dishwashing machine that makes a different, very annoying sound!

Paul finds it so awful that he can only stand it when he puts his hands over his ears. Paul wonders how he is going to be able to get through his long workday now.



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## ◆ HELP THE PERSON ◆

Diana is facing a difficult choice between two job assignments at the store where she works.

Diana prefers the first job, working the cash register. But the uniform required for cashiers is a scratchy, uncomfortable material in a color she hates.

In the second job, putting away boxes in the store's warehouse, she can wear her own clothes, but the other workers there often have music playing that Diana really hates to listen to.



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## ◆ HELP THE PERSON ◆

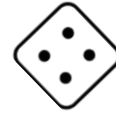
Julia just found out that she has a dentist appointment next Wednesday at 2 pm.

Unfortunately, that is right in the middle of her job shift. She goes to look for her boss, Mr. James, to let him know. She finds him talking to his own boss in an office. Julia walks in and says, "I need to go to the dentist next Wednesday at 2 pm."

Mr. James replies in an annoyed tone of voice, "Julia! Why are you telling me this right now?"



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## ◆ HELP THE PERSON ◆

In her first week of job training in a computer installation business, Amelia has an exciting new idea!

She has figured out a new way they can do the computer installation work. At a staff meeting, she takes a couple minutes to explain her ideas.

Suddenly, Amelia's boss interrupts her to tell her, "That's enough of your ideas, Amelia."



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## ◆ HELP THE PERSON ◆

Marco faces a difficult choice between two jobs. One job involves computer coding and would be entirely from home. The other job is computer coding in an office setting. Marco feels much more comfortable working at home, but he worries he will be tempted to snack and play video games. In the office job, Marco would get to practice his "people skills," but it would probably be challenging and tiring for him to be around people all day. He is not sure what to do.



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## ◆ HELP THE PERSON ◆

Brian is doing okay in his job duties. The hard part of his day is the lunch break.

At Brian's job, they get a half-hour break for lunch. Everyone eats in a little break room together, talking while eating.

Brian finds it really stressful to talk to people while he is eating. But when he just sits there eating without talking, he is afraid his co-workers will think he is unfriendly.



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◆ FIX THE THOUGHT ◆

*"People were mean to me in high school. When I get a job, the people there will be mean to me too."*



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◆ FIX THE THOUGHT ◆

*"After all those years of school, I am used to it. I am really afraid of learning a completely new work routine."*



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◆ FIX THE THOUGHT ◆

*"There is no point in working if the only jobs available seem boring and meaningless to me."*



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◆ FIX THE THOUGHT ◆

*"I have been looking forward to doing more of my favorite activities at home after high school is finished. Work will just take away time from that."*



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◆ FIX THE THOUGHT ◆

*"What's the point of working? All the things I need and like are right here at home."*



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◆ FIX THE THOUGHT ◆

*"I have applied for several jobs and no one has hired me. It looks like no employer out there wants someone like me."*



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◆ FIX THE THOUGHT ◆

*"Since I got fired from my first job, that means I will never be able to hold a job."*



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◆ FIX THE THOUGHT ◆

*"Working is fine for other people, but not someone like me."*



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## ◆ ACT IT OUT ◆

You are playing the role of the *parent* of a 19-year-old named Chris. Chris has just gotten a paid job working 20 hours a week. The adult with you now will play the role of Chris.

You (the parent) are having trouble paying household bills since you had to replace the family's car, which was wrecked in an accident. Explain to Chris that Chris will need to give up part of their income to make car payments.



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## ◆ ACT IT OUT ◆

You are interviewing for a job at a pizza place, computer store or grocery. The adult with you will act as your job interviewer.

You will answer the following two questions:

*"Why do you want to work here?"*

*"There are ten other people also applying for this job. Do you have some special qualities that would make me want to hire you, instead of one of the others?"*



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## ◆ ACT IT OUT ◆

Play the role of a manager in a pharmacy who needs to talk to an employee about a problem.

The employee, named Drew, does well with stocking shelves and cleaning. Drew's problem is that when they make conversation with the customers, they almost always talk about their favorite topic, which is old TV comedy shows from the 1980's. Some customers appear to be annoyed by this. Show the employee how to talk about something else.



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## ◆ ACT IT OUT ◆

A 20-year-old worker, Jordan, is having trouble making "small talk" with co-workers during breaks and mealtimes at work. The adult with you now will play the role of Jordan.

Your job is to help Jordan make simple small talk. You will practice a short conversation with "Jordan" now. You will demonstrate how to ask questions on the topic of the weather and weekends.



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## ◆ ACT IT OUT ◆

You are interviewing for a job at a fast-food restaurant, hotel cleaning crew or lawn service. The adult with you will act as your job interviewer.

You will answer the following question:

*"Can you please tell me something about yourself?"*

In your answer, think of things to say about yourself that might make them want to hire you.



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## ◆ ACT IT OUT ◆

You are interviewing for a job, and this role play is just the very beginning – when you walk into the room and greet the interviewer. (The adult with you will be the interviewer.)

One: Walk up to the interviewer, both of you standing, shake the interviewer's hand, and say, "Hello, I'm \_\_\_\_\_. It's good to meet you."

Two: Say, "Thanks for interviewing me today."



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## ◆ ACT IT OUT ◆

You will play the role of someone who is helping to encourage a friend, Alex, who is having a hard time getting a job.

The adult with you will play the role of Alex.

Alex's backstory:

\*Alex had three job interviews but no job offers yet.

\*Alex wants to give up.



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## ◆ ACT IT OUT ◆

You have applied for a job. The manager of this place is calling you to schedule an interview!

The adult with you will play the part of the manager who is calling you.

Act out this short phone call. Include:

One: An eager, friendly tone of voice.

Two: "I'm looking forward to my interview. Thanks for calling me."



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