

## Appendix B

### Interview Protocol

# Research Support Services for Employment of Young Adults on the Autism Spectrum

## Interview protocol

### Introductory statement and consent

Thank you for meeting with me today. Before we get started, I wanted to let you know that you can turn on closed captioning if you haven't already. There is a button labeled "CC" at the bottom left of the Webex screen that you can push to enable live closed captioning.

My name is \_\_\_\_, and I work for Mathematica. I'm joined by \_\_\_\_, who will be taking notes. We are assisting the U.S. Department of Labor in learning more about the employment experiences of young adults on the autism spectrum. Thank you for responding to the earlier survey and for agreeing to participate in this follow-up interview. Today I would like to hear about your experiences with work and job-related services and training. I have a few questions to learn your positive or negative experiences looking for work or in your job. You can participate in the interview whether or not you have not worked for pay, or if you have or have not disclosed to potential, current, or past employers that you are on the autism spectrum. I encourage you to speak openly and share examples from your own experience.

First, let me explain how we will use the information you share with us. You may remember participating in a survey earlier this year. We will use what we learn through this interview and others like it to help us interpret what we learned through the survey. We will summarize the information that you share today in a report that we will produce. We'll use what we hear to help develop policy that can improve employment experiences for young adults on the autism spectrum. We will keep your information as private as possible. This means that we will not include your name in any report. Also, we will not share what we hear with the people or organizations that might help you find a job or your employers.

It is your choice to participate, and you can skip a question if you do not want to talk about something. We will talk today for about 30 minutes.<sup>1</sup> There are no known risks associated with participating in this interview. To thank you for your time, we will send you a \$40 gift card by email. The email will have instructions for redeeming the gift card.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB # is XXXXXXXX and the expiration date is MM/DD/YYYY. If you have any comments on this collection of information, please contact David Rosenblum.

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<sup>1</sup> Priority questions that should be asked are shown in **bold**.

I would like to record our conversation to make sure I do not miss anything you share. I will not share the recording with others outside of the study team, and it will be deleted by the end of our study. Is it okay with you if I record our talk today?

**[If participant consents:]** I will turn on the recording now but let me know if you would like me to stop at any time. You're welcome to turn your camera on or keep it off. It's up to you.

**[NOTETAKER/MEETING HOST: PRESS RECORD IN WEBEX]**

Do you agree to participate in the interview?

Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

**[If participant does not consent:** End interview.]

[Interviewer note: Ahead of interview, select option A or option B depending on prior survey responses.

- Option A. People who have had regular full-time employment. Defined by people who have worked 35 or more hours per week (full-time) for more than 2 years, and are at least 18 years old.
- Option B. People who have never had regular full-time employment. Defined by people who have never worked 35 or more hours per week and/or have never worked at a particular job for 6 months or longer, and are at least 18 years old.]

## A. RESPONDENTS WITH SEVERAL YEARS OF REGULAR EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

### I. Employment and job experiences

*CONTEXT: Insert responses from survey questions E8-E15 on characteristics of current work.*

First, I'd like to hear about your experience with paid work.

1. I understand from our survey that you were employed recently. *[Confirm]* Are you currently employed at a paid job?
2. What do you like or dislike about your [recent/current] job?
3. Do you think you will be working in this job two years from now? Why or why not?
4. Do you feel that you can advance and grow in this job? Why or why not?
5. Are you facing any specific challenges at work now?

I'd also like to ask about accommodations. Accommodations are changes or supports at work that help you do your job better, like flexible hours, special equipment, or extra help from your boss or coworkers.

6. What type of help or accommodation might help address these challenges?

ASK IF TIME PERMITS:

7. Tell me about how you were hired at your [recent/current] job. *[Probe: what was easy or hard about the application process? What did you like or dislike about the interview process?]*
8. Tell me about how you were onboarded and learned your job responsibilities. What worked well? What was confusing?

I'd like to talk next about some barriers or difficulties you may have experienced in your work.

9. **What has been the hardest part about finding or staying in your job as a person on the autism spectrum?** *[Probe: For example, what are your interactions with your supervisor or coworkers like? How does your work environment such as light, noise, or other sensory inputs affect you? How does anxiety or difficulty with attention impact your work?]*
10. What other barriers or challenges have made it hard for you to find work or stay in a job? *[Probe: For example, how has your health impacted your work? How easy or hard is it for you to get to and from work? Have you had difficulty communicating with others at your job? How have other aspects of your identity impacted your work?]*
11. **What kind of help would make it easier for you to find a job or stay in your job?** *[Probe: For example, have you received or requested accommodations from your*

employer such as changes to your schedule or additional written instructions? What accommodations would help you address the barriers you named earlier?]

12. What do you think are the biggest problems that need to be fixed to make finding a good job and advancing in your career easier for everyone?

## II. Use of job-related services and training

*CONTEXT: Insert summary responses from survey section D on service use.*

Next, I'd like to talk about job-related services and training. This could include career counseling, help in finding a job, or vocational education such as internships, training in computer skills, social skills, how to write a resume, or how to interview for a job. I understand from our survey that you [have/have not] used some of these services.

>> *Move on to question 14 if have used some services.*

13. IF HAVE NOT USED: Are you aware of these types of services in your community?

14. IF AWARE OF SERVICES: What were the reasons you did not use job-related services or training that are available in your community?

**15. What kind of services helped you attain and retain employment or have a better employment experience? What other services would have made it easier for you to find a good job?**

16. IF EXPERIENCE WITH SERVICES: What part of XX service did you find most helpful?

17. What barriers or challenges have made it hard for you to access or use good services? [Probe: for example, how has your health impacted your ability to access services? How easy or hard is it for you to get to and from training sites? How have other aspects of your identity impacted your use of services?] What kind of help would have made it easier for you to understand and use job-related services?

18. If you could change anything about the service system to make it better for yourself or others on the autism spectrum, what would you change?

## III. Conclusion

19. Is there anything else you'd like to tell me before we end? Is there anything that you think I've missed that I should know?

20. In appreciation for participating in the interview, we will send you a \$40 gift card. Can you confirm that the email address we used to set up this call is a good place for us to send your gift card? If you will not be able to access a gift card via email, we can mail you a gift card.

[IF THE RESPONDENT DOES NOT WANT ELECTRONIC GIFT CARD] To what address should we mail the card?

Ok—you should receive your gift card within a week. Thank you so much for your time. We really appreciate all that you have shared.

## B. RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE NEVER HAD REGULAR EMPLOYMENT

### I. Employment

*CONTEXT: Insert responses from survey question E48 “Why have you decided not to look for work right now?” and questions E49-E55 to identify responses to probe on reasons for not working.*

1. First, I’d like to hear about your experience with searching for work. I understand from our survey that you are not currently employed. Is that right?
  - a. IF CURRENTLY EMPLOYED: Tell me about your job. When did you get hired?
  - b. IF NOT CURRENTLY EMPLOYED: **Are you interested in working? Why or why not?**

*PROBE IF INTERESTED IN WORKING: What do you think keeps you from working? Tell me more about [barrier identified in survey or interview]. Do you see yourself working in a few years?*

*PROBE IF NOT INTERESTED IN WORKING: What about [barrier identified in survey or interview] makes you not interested in working? For example, do your health, transportation access, or benefits that you receive from Social Security or Medicaid keep you from working? Do you see yourself working in a few years?*

*>> Move on to section II if not interested in working now or in a few years.*

IF INTERESTED IN WORKING: I’d like to talk about some barriers or difficulties you may have experienced while trying to find work.

2. **What has been the hardest part about finding a job as a person on the autism spectrum?**
3. What other barriers or challenges have made it hard for you to find work? [Probe: For example, how has your health impacted your ability to find good work? How easy or hard is it for you to get to and from job sites for interviews or work? How have other aspects of your identity impacted your job search?]

I’d also like to ask about accommodations. Accommodations are changes to the hiring process that help you get a job or supports in the job itself to help you do your job better, like flexible hours, special equipment, or extra help from your boss or coworkers.

4. **What kind of help would make it easier for you to find a job or stay in a job?**  
[Probe: For example, have you requested accommodations such as additional written instructions or changes to a job's schedule? What accommodations would help you address the barriers you named earlier?]
5. **What do you think are the biggest problems that need to be fixed to make finding a good job easier for everyone?**

## II. Use of job-related services and training

*CONTEXT: Insert summary responses from survey section D on service use.*

Next, I'd like to talk about job-related services and training. This could include career counseling, help in finding a job, or vocational education such as internships, training in computer skills, social skills, how to write a resume, or how to interview for a job. I understand from our survey that you [have/have not] used some of these services.

>> *Move on to question 7 if have used some services.*

6. IF HAVE NOT USED SERVICES: Are you aware of these types of services in your community?
7. IF AWARE OF SERVICES: Why did you choose to not use services such as job-related training?
8. IF INTERESTED IN WORKING: **What kind of help would make it easier for you to find a job?**
9. IF EXPERIENCE WITH SERVICES: What was your favorite part of XX service?
10. What barriers or challenges have made it hard for you to access or use good services?  
[Probe: for example, how has your health impacted your ability to access services? How easy or hard is it for you to get to and from training sites? How have other aspects of your identity impacted your use of services?]
11. What kind of help would have made it easier for you to understand and use job-related services?
12. If you could change anything about the service system to make it better for yourself or others on the autism spectrum, what would you change?

## III. Conclusion

13. Is there anything else you'd like to tell me before we end? Is there anything that you think I've missed that I should know?
14. In appreciation for participating in the interview, we will send you a \$40 gift card. Can you confirm that the email address we used to set up this call is a good place for us to send your gift card? If you will not be able to access a gift card via email, we can mail you a gift card.

[IF THE RESPONDENT DOES NOT WANT ELECTRONIC GIFT CARD] To what address should we mail the card?

Ok—you should receive your gift card within a week. Thank you so much for your time. We really appreciate all that you have shared.