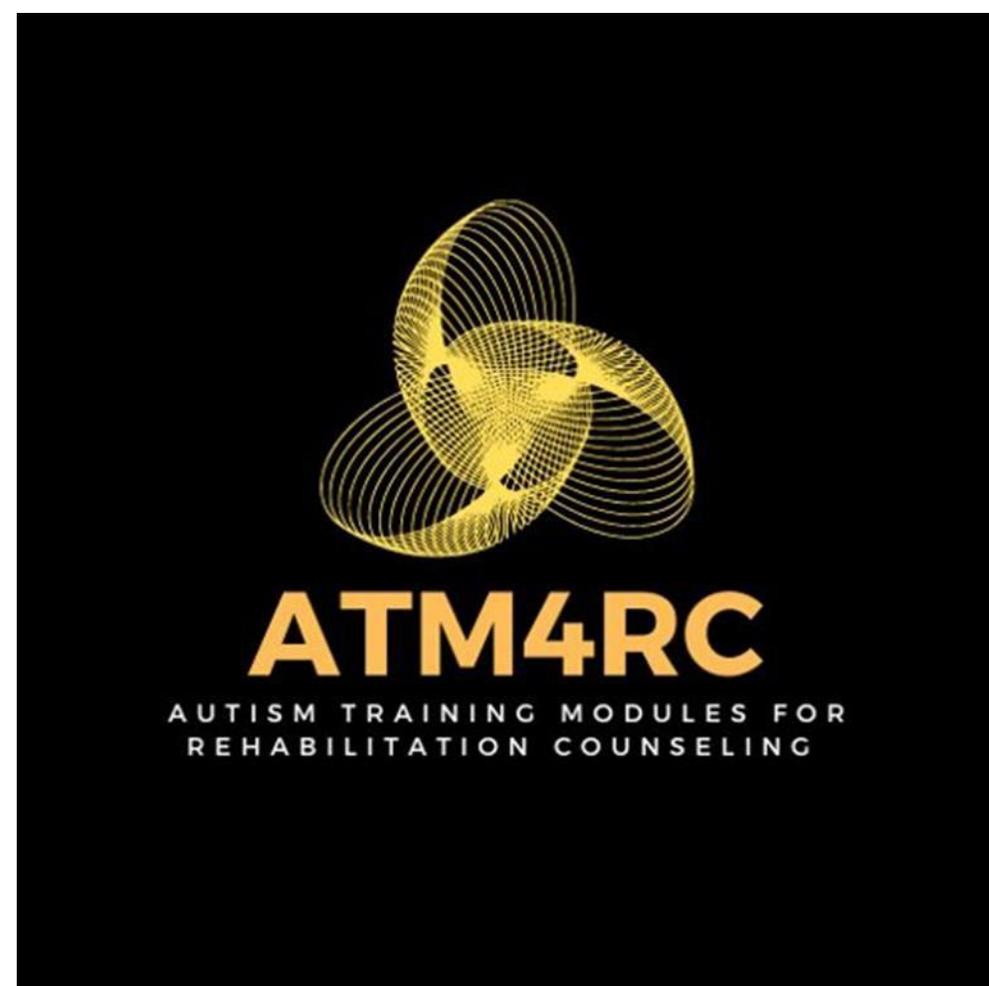


Use of Peer Mediated Instruction and Intervention (PMII) with Autistic Persons

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Module Objectives



By the end of this module, participants will be able to:

1. Define what peer mediated instruction and intervention (PMII) is and why it is needed.
2. Describe ways to recruit and train peers so they can be more effective.
3. Identify steps needed to implement PMII and implement.

PMII: An Introduction

- Most of us have friendships that provide support and that may teach us new and useful skills.
- These relationships occur in a variety of settings such as home, school, work, the gym, and pretty much anywhere social interactions take place.
- However, navigating these social relationships may be more challenging for folks with autism.
- Encouraging supportive relationships between non-autistic people and our autistic clients can help build success in workplace environments.
- Watch for more on the role of PMII in job coaching:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FQLD1YIL3yc>



Peer Mediated Instruction and Intervention (PMII)

- PMII engages non-autistic peers in tutoring or mentoring autistic individuals in skill building with particular focus on social skill development (Sam & AFIRM team, 2015).
- PMII aims to increase social opportunities for autistic individuals in structured and naturalistic environments to provide a supportive encouraging atmosphere for skill development (Nietzel, 2008)



PMII: An Evidence-Based Practice for Persons with Autism



- Alternative names for PMII: “Peer Modeling, Peer Initiation Training, Direct Training for Target Student and Peer, Peer Networks, and Peer Supports” (Sam & AFIRM, 2015).
- Opportunities structured by job coach/other instructor, who also trains peers.
- May be used with prompting, reinforcement, visual supports or other EBPs.
- Most research has focused on young children but studies with adolescents and young adults are increasing in frequency.

(Carter, Asmus & Moss, 2014; Hume et al., 2023; Sam & AFIRM, 2015)

EBP PMII Research with Adolescents



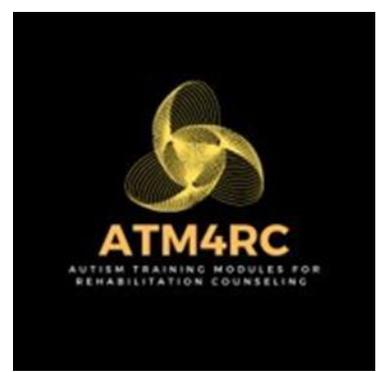
- Athamana and Cushing (2019) pilot study
 - Work-based learning experience (WBLE) with high school students with autism –practicing of work skills in transitional setting (specific focus on transition from high school to community/work setting).
 - Students with Autism developed additional social interaction skills and independent job skills.
- Athamana and Cushing (2023) pilot study
 - Also utilized WBLE with high school transition students with intellectual disabilities (ID).
 - Students with ID developed additional social interaction skills and independent job skills

EBP PMII Research with Autistic Adolescents



- MacFarland and Fisher (2021)
 - Used video modeling of skills followed by practice with non-autistic peers.
 - Study indicated improvement in skill retention and generalization when PMII was paired with video modeling as compared to video modeling alone.
- Pfeiffer et al. (2024)
 - PMII utilized to teach and practice travel skills with autistic adults
 - Improvements were statistically significant in use of public transportation and ability to navigate communities

Additional Research Opportunities



- Platos and Wojaczek (2018) “...argue that there is a critical need for research on PMI that focuses on friendship, social participation, and well-being of adolescents and adults with ASD, as well as engages peers in the community settings” (p 747).
 - Most existing research focuses on children
 - Job skills would fit well with this proposed research agenda

Benefits of Using PMII



- Promotes generalization of skills.
- Increases opportunities for social engagement.
- Takes advantage of naturalistic environments and opportunities.

(Athamana & Cushing, 2019 & 2023; Carter, Asmus & Moss, 2014; Hume et al., 2023; MacFarland & Fisher, 2011; Mahoney, 2023; Pfeiffer et al, 2024; Sam & AFIRM, 2015)

- Additionally provides opportunities for non-autistic peers and autistic peers to “meet in the middle”, learning how to appreciate each other and their respective needs

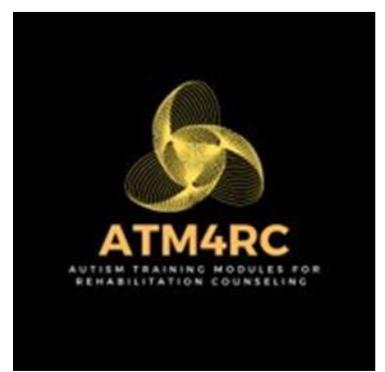
Suggestions for Recruiting Peers



- Pre-existing positive relationship with the individual with Autism
- Has expressed interest in participating
- Similar work schedule to increase opportunities for PMII
- Good communication skills
- Willing to learn
- Works well with others

(Carter, Asmus, & Moss, 2014; Carter et al., 2015; Sam & AFIRM, 2015)

Suggestions for Training Peers



Training:

- Start with an explicit plan revolving around autistic individual's needs and preferences; identify specific expectation of individual, peers and support staff.
- Provide orientation for peers, familiarizing them with their role, and providing training on how to perform that role (more information on orientation next slide)
- Elements such as scripts for tasks, starters for conversations, possible prompts and instructions for conducting role plays should be provided to assist peer in preparing to serve as a peer model

(Carter, Asmus, & Moss, 2014; Carter et al., 2015; Sam & AFIRM, 2015)

Peer Orientation



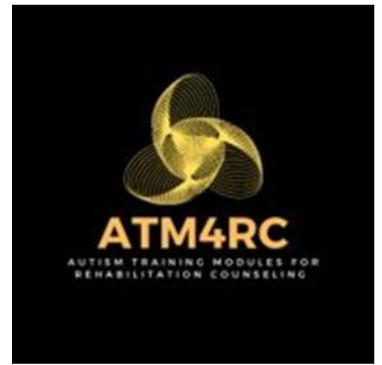
- Purpose of peer support
 - Autistic individual's strengths, needs and preferences for communication
 - Overall goals for PMII
 - Confidentiality expectations and appropriate language
 - Expectations in specific setting
 - Review of peer support plan
 - Model use of communication strategies and devices
 - Share examples of providing encouragement/feedback
 - When to ask for help
 - Questions or concerns
 - Next steps
- (Carter et al., 2015, p. 14)

Other Considerations

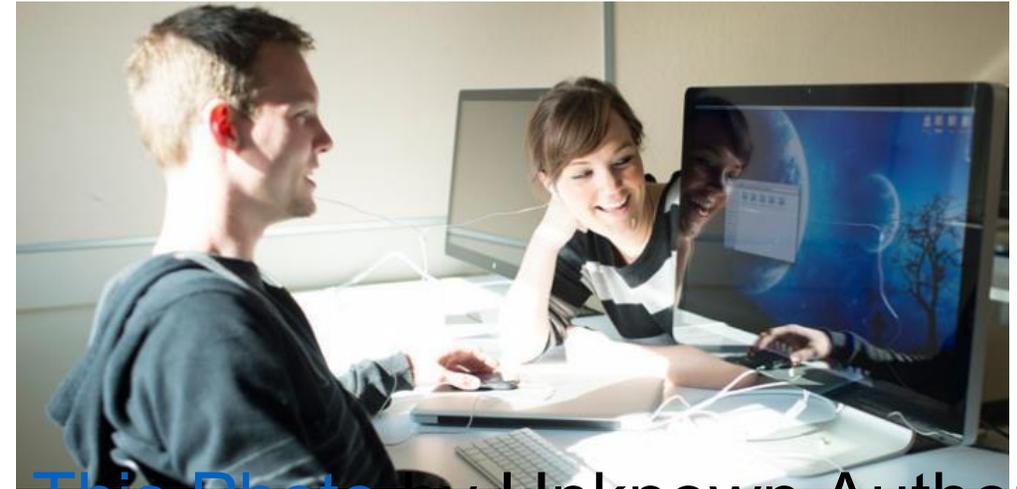


- Whenever possible the autistic individuals must be involved in planning and orienting peers to adequately respect their neurodivergence and their right to self-determination and autonomy.
- For more information and examples on structuring PMII/peer support plans see Carter, et. al. (2015) at https://cola.unh.edu/sites/default/files/media/2022/03/carter_et_al_2015_promoting_inclusion_social_interaction_and_learning_through_peer_supports.pdf

Evidence-Based Practices to Teach Peers to use with Autistic Individuals



- Neurodiversity and disability rights
- Task analysis of skill/behavior
- Roleplaying
- Social scripts
- Written cues, use of visual supports
- Modeling
- Prompting
- Reinforcement



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***SEE OTHER MODULES FOR SPECIFICS ON THE PRACTICES LISTED ABOVE

Conversation Starters for Peers



Bambara et al., 2018, provided Conversation Starters for high school peers who worked with autistic peers

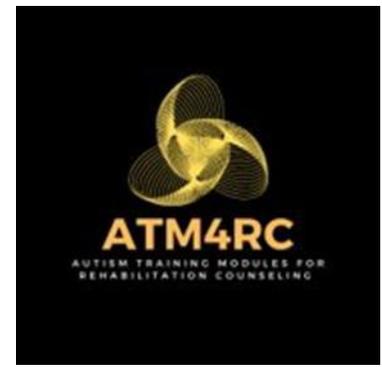
Read

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0040059918775057>

- Show interest
- Encourage initiations
- Keep the conversation going
- Help your friend respond
- Talk and take turns
- Make leading statements
- Promote use of learner's target skills

Self-Questioning Activity

- Aimee is a 25-year-old autistic adult who works at a busy hair salon. Her duties include:
 - Greeting customers
 - Checking them in and out
 - Offering lollipops or stickers to children
- Aimee has difficulty multi-tasking, especially when there is more than one customer.
- She has challenges prioritizing customers over other tasks such as sweeping the floor or taking her break at an exact time.
- Aimee also becomes overwhelmed when given other tasks such as stocking shelves.
- Aimee expresses a desire to improve her work performance. (continued next slide)



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Self-Questioning Activity



Consider these questions:

- When would it be best to schedule time with her peer to work on these issues?
- How could a peer help in modeling skills and procedures for Aimee?
- What evidence-based practices would be useful for helping her improve? How would you train peers to implement these?



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Abbreviated List for Implementation

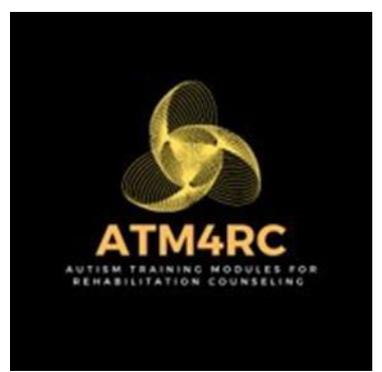
Taken from: Sam, A., & AFIRM Team.

(2015). <http://afirm.fpg.unc.edu/peer-mediated-instruction-and-intervention>



Plan	Use	Monitor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduce these partners• Provide necessary materials to learner• Provide opportunities for daily interactions• Meet with peers for debriefing, progress monitoring, problem solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collect data• Monitor for lack of progress or other concerns, and adjust if necessary• Do peers need more training? Are other EBPs needed?• Fade as soon as possible

Other Tools for Implementation



Review:

- Sam, A., & AFIRM Team. (2015).
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED595339.pdf>
- Neitzel, J. (2008).
https://autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/sites/autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/files/PMII_Overview.pdf

PMII Tips



- Use a team approach- collaborating with autistic individual, p instructors, staff etc.
- Where?– explore places where natural social contexts exist for peers and individuals with autism to meet
- Choose peers who can be responsible conversation partners, are willing to attend trainings and sessions, who share common interests, who have strong conversational and responsive communication skills.
- Be sure the autistic individual is responsive to the peer.
- Communicate regularly with the team, including obtaining feedback from peers and individuals on how well the strategies are working.

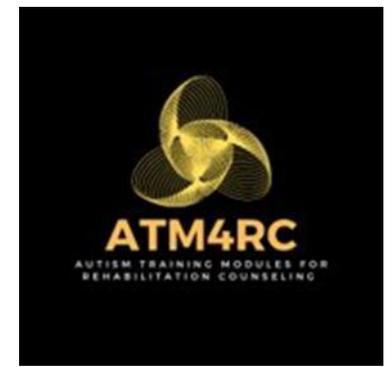
(Carter, Asmus, & Moss, 2014; Carter et al., 2015; Neitzel, J. 2008; Sam & AFIRM, 2015)

Activity: Creating a Peer Mediated Instruction and Intervention (PMII) Plan for Autistic Adults



- Purpose: To create a PMII plan for autistic adults.
- Description: Using the “steps for implementing PMII” document, you will create, implement, and evaluate a plan for one of your autistic clients.
- Directions:
 1. Select one of your autistic clients for whom you think PMII will improve their performance at work or home and identify the skill or behavior.
 2. Using the “steps for implementing PMII” document, create, implement, and monitor implementation of the plan you created.
 3. Evaluate the overall efficacy of the PMII plan you created.

References (1 of 3)



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- Neitzel, J. (2008). Overview of peer-mediated instruction and intervention for children and youth with autism spectrum disorders. Chapel Hill, NC: National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, The University of North Carolina.
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- Sam, A., & AFIRM Team. (2015). Peer-mediated instruction and intervention. Chapel Hill, NC: National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorder, FPG Child Development Center, University of North Carolina. <http://afirm.fpg.unc.edu/peer-mediated-instruction-and-intervention> or <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED595339.pdf>

Additional Resources



Autism Focused Intervention Resources & Modules (AFIRM)

This interactive module provides in-depth training on peer-mediated instruction and intervention for autistic persons.

- <https://afirm.fpg.unc.edu/peer-mediated-instruction-and-intervention>
- The module is an Open Educational Resource (OER)

Additional Resources: “Effective Practices in Peer Mentoring an Introduction to a New Resource for Practitioners”



This hour-long webinar provides a detailed discussion of peer mentoring programs (in general, not ASD-specific)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BypZSWa5w8>

(From MENTOR – Boston, Massachusetts - <https://www.mentoring.org/>)

