

Understanding Sexuality and ASD:

CONSIDERATIONS FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS ON THE SPECTRUM

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ABOUT THE PRESENTERS

Understanding Sexuality & ASD: Considerations for College Students on the Spectrum



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Title IX professionals should be aware of the unique challenges posed by individuals with ASD involved in Title IX matters, as complainants and respondents.

17%

of young adults with autism enroll in a four-year college

11%

of college graduates are now neurodiverse





DIFFICULT TO DIAGNOSE - AND IS OFTEN MISSED

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Adaptive functioning refers to the ability of a person to interact with the world and support oneself with or without supports

Individuals with ASD may have differential adaptive ability versus intellectual ability

An individual with ASD may be highly intelligent with poor adaptive functioning.

CHALLENGES FOR THOSE ON THE SPECTRUM

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Sensory challenges - noise, smells, sounds

Communication -shame and embarrassment of disclosing a disability, expressing sexual needs

**Norms in public vs.
private spaces**

**Understanding non-verbal communication
and verbal nuances**

Dating and boundaries

Online issues



NETFLIX

MORE VULNERABLE TO VICTIMIZATION

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35%

**of individuals with autism have
been the victim of a crime**

01

ASD individuals may be vulnerable to abuse and manipulation (may be naïve, may mimic others without realizing any issues in doing so, may not be able to tell if an intimate partner is lying or manipulating them, etc.)

02

ASD individuals may be victimized due to behavior perceived as antisocial

RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

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01

ASD individuals benefit from instruction from individuals specialized in teaching ASD students

02

ASD requires specific instruction on expectations of sexual behavior (informal social “rules,” as well as legal expectations) as well as the reasons why social rules exist in society

03

Repetition and review will assist in comprehension and internalizing of guidelines



Question:

**How many of you
have worked on Title
IX matters involving
students on the
autism spectrum?**



SPECIFIC CHALLENGES IN THE TITLE IX PROCESS

HEALTHY SELF ADVOCACY

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01

Self-advocacy requires a student to communicate clearly and assert the student's interests, needs, and rights

02

Self-advocacy requires sharing of thoughts and feelings without exploding

03

How to support students? Considering allowing student advisors to take on a more active role in the advising process

A woman with dark, curly hair is laughing heartily, her eyes squeezed shut and her mouth open in a wide smile. She is wearing a light blue button-down shirt over a pink top. In the foreground, a brown paper coffee cup with a white lid is visible. In the background, the back of a man's head and shoulders are visible, suggesting a social setting like a cafe or office breakroom. The lighting is bright and natural, coming from the left.

**SEXUAL
NORMS ARE
EXCEEDINGLY
COMPLEX AND
LARGELY
UNSPOKEN.**



SCENARIO 1: **STALKING**



SCENARIO 2:

HOUSING ISSUES



SCENARIO 3:

SEXUAL HARASSMENT



SCENARIO 4:

SEXUAL ASSAULT



SCENARIO 5:

CUSTOM PROGRAMS



SCENARIO 6:

VULNERABILITY WITH PROFESSORS



**BOTTOM LINE: A TYPICAL
TITLE IX PROCESS FAILS THE
NEURO-DIVERGENT**

RESOURCES

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College Autism Spectrum

- <https://collegeautismspectrum.com/>

National Alliance on Mental Illness

- <https://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-Conditions/Related-Conditions/Autism>

Autistic Self-Advocacy Network

- <https://autisticadvocacy.org/resources/>
- <https://autisticadvocacy.org/resources/books/navigating-college/>

Organization for Autism Research

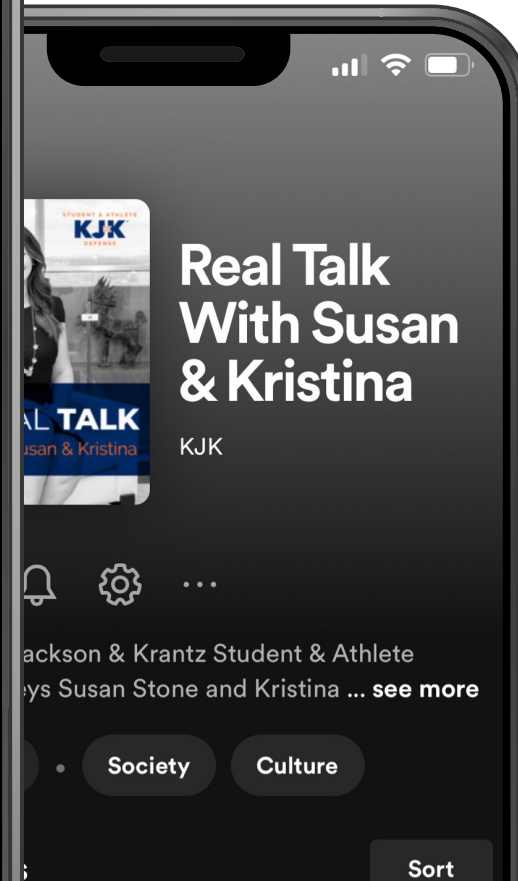
- <https://researchautism.org/postsecondary-education/>
- <https://researchautism.org/resources/a-guide-for-transition-to-adulthood/>

QUESTIONS?

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Instagram:
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Podcast:
**Real Talk with
Susan & Kristina**