

Parental Perceptions of Personal Strengths in Emerging Adults with Down Syndrome



PRESENTER:

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BACKGROUND:

- Down syndrome (DS) is the leading genetic explanation of intellectual disability and is often associated with developmental delays.
- A successful transition to adulthood involves growth in independent living, employment preparedness, and community involvement.
- While the medical model of disability emphasizes deficits, a strengths-based approach is needed.
- The study used **phenomenological** interviews to ask parents of children with DS about their experiences with raising adults.

METHODS:

- **8 parents** (6 mothers and 2 fathers) were interviewed.
- Parents were interviewed via Zoom where they were asked **open-ended questions**.
- Data were coded using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis to understand the essence of parents' experiences.

Questioning Route

- Tell me about your child.
- What does a typical day look like for your child?
- What does it mean for your child to be an "adult"?
- How do you feel about your child becoming an adult?
- What does it mean for your child to be independent?
- What is your child's living situation at the moment?
- What comes to mind when you think about work and your child?
- How does your child access transportation (e.g., if they wanted to get to work, to the grocery store, etc.)?
- What is your child doing now in your community?



Emerging adults with Down Syndrome display a variety of personal strengths as they transition to adulthood.

Life Skills



"Life of the party, every party!"
-Professor

"She gets up, she gets dressed..."
-Ann

"He helps with the laundry, he folds, he sorts, he puts it away."
-Dutch



Work Skills

"She separated the coins, the quarters, nickels, and dimes, and we took them out and counted them and counted the bills"
-Billie

"...she likes people, so she was able to, you know, interact with a lot of people [working at a grocery store]"
-Ann

"He's a great worker, they love having him there [as a volunteer]"
-Beach

"He's talked, about wanting to work at [a local grocery chain] one day."
-Dutch



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RESULTS:

Life Skills Strengths



Social aspects of self-care such as having a lot of friends.



Managing personal belongings such as making one's bed, packing one's backpack or lunch, etc.



Simpler daily living activities such as getting up on time, brushing teeth, brushing hair, etc.

Work Skills Strengths



Managing work supplies by following instructions for a task, setting tables, etc.



Working with people (e.g., relationships with coworkers, greeting customers, etc.)



Being hardworking, dedicated, and disciplined at work.



Wanting a particular job or vocation such as going to college or being an actress.

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