






## Two decision making courses

Rutgers University NJ – USA


June 22 2015

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## NAOMIE

student with a severe depression



## NAOMIE

- I don't know which educational programme to choose
- Is it possible to restart my previous study?
- I have problems concentrating
- How can I handle this at school?
- How can I prevent isolation from other students?
- What do I tell about myself at school. To whom?
- Can I finance my study?

## Decision making course

**Goal**  
 To help young adults with psychiatric disabilities who dropped out of school to choose and get regular education

1. Making an informed choice & setting an Educational goal
2. Preparing for the educational setting of preference

## PROGRAM

### 1. Making an informed choice

- Identifying personal criteria
- Describing alternative educational environments
- Choosing a college-university (making a decision)
- Setting an Educational goal

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## PROGRAM

### 2. Preparing for the educational setting of preference

- Disclosure
- Identifying expected barriers
- Select and train critical skills
- Select and organize needs and resources

## PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

5 courses at Hanze University Groningen

- 51 participants; male: 30 female: 21
- Age: 17- 37 year
- Living situation: living independently; living together with family or friend; supported housing; hospital/clinic
- Diagnoses: schizophrenia; affective disorder; personality disorder; anorexia nervosa; autism
- Duration of contact with Health Care: 1-16 years
- Medication: 70%
- Education (before start): Primary education 31%; Secondary education 53%; Tertiary education 16%

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## RESULTS

### STUDENTS (n=51)

- 35 completed the course (69%)
- 28 made a choice for further education (55%)
- 7 chose for work or another short course (14%)

### FURTHER EDUCATION

Secondary school for adults

Community College: Nurse; Cook; Beauty specialist

University of Applied Sciences: Social Work; Law; Physiotherapy; Economics; International business; Laboratory worker; Hotel management

University: International Business

## NAOMIE



### AFTER ATTENDING THE COURSE

- I choose to restart my previous education,
- But at a different college I visited two Colleges and know how they can support me
- I know what and how to tell students & staff about my mental illness (disclosure)
- I have practiced with note taking and tape recording
- I am eligible for financial support from the government

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## CHOOZY

- Highschool request:

Develop an easily transferable module for highschool students with autism to help them making an informed choice for further education

- The module is based on the decision making course

## WHY CHOOZY? Making choices is difficult !

### For all high school students

- You have to know yourself, defend your choice
- Knowledge of strengths and weaknesses
- There are too many study opportunities
- Difficult to imagine a study based on virtual information

## WHY CHOOZY? Making choices is difficult !

Challenges for young people with autism starting at college or university

- Lack of support parents and teachers
- Difficulties with performing in large groups
- More self confidence needed

## WHY CHOOSY? Making choices is difficult!

- How to get access to the right information about the study? ( program-skills-support)
  - If you make the wrong choice, it will cost:
    - Time
    - Money
    - Frustration
    - Lower self confidence
- No further education > Lack of perspective !**

## BARRIERS for students with autism

### COGNITIVE

- Information Processing
- Distinguish main and side issues
- Make connections
- Abstraction Power
- Planning
- Flexibility

### BEHAVIOUR

- Social interaction difficulties
- Communication challenges
- Use of language: literally <> figuratively
- Tendency to engage in repetitive behaviors

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## Modifications

- Structuring the program
  - Qualified teachers
  - Manage expectations
- Modify assignments for students
  - Clear and concrete
  - Unambiguous language (not figuratively)
  - Fixed structure
- Available time
  - 16 hours in stead of 72 hours

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## Modifications

- Individual attention
  - Selecting appropriate university students
  - University students supported high school students
- Selection of target group
  - Teachers and school counselors
- Involvement of 'significant others' (parents, friends, teachers)
  - Avoid stigma (using word 'autism' was not appropriate)
- Evaluate outcomes
  - No representative follow-up study

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## RESULTS

### STUDENTS

- 18 out of 22 students made a choice for further education
- Individual contact was valued, in particular contact with university students
- Students know better how to present themselves

### PARENTS - CARETAKERS

- Extra attention and time was valued very much!
- Better motivated choices

### SCHOOL - INTERNET

- Ready to use manual (Choosy) for high school students with autism and teachers

## Q & A



ImpuISE project 2013-2016

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