



## The Transition from Higher Education to the Workplace for Autistic Students

**A presentation by Emily Raclaw and Molly Connors on September 28, 2023**

0:00

Good morning, everybody. Emily Raclaw, I am a middle-aged light skinned black woman, with curly brown hair with a little light on the end wearing a cable knit, fabulous, ivory colored sweater.

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Go ahead, Molly. You can describe yourself.

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Hi everyone, I'm Molly. I am a white woman in her early twenties. I have brown hair, and I'm wearing a navy blue shirt.

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Excellent. So to kinda give some context of where this presentation is coming from. I initially had a whole entire, different idea of how I wanted to do this. I was going to be like, I know so much, let's talk about all these things. But as I've been working with Molly for her whole time she's been here at Marquette. And as she's getting ready to graduate in December, these conversations are things we've just been doing. I want to say since the end of last semester, and even more so right now, and I kinda thought, rather than saying, hey, here are all the things you're supposed to do. I'm thinking, we should kinda just talk about what the issues are. And normalize a lot of the things that are happening, and then talk about stuff that we've found to be useful for both my practice, and also for Molly. And then, kinda take questions from people to invite you into the conversation. So, with that being said, I will jump into it, and try to sound very smart. Next slide.

1:23

So, this, we have our challenges, which are, that we have discouraged workers. That means that 85% right now of degree, holding autistic adults, are unemployed. I want to say where I got that statistic from but every time I Googled it, it said, U.S. Department of Labor report, I could not find that report, so there's an asterisk next to it for that reason. Number two is getting a job. The application process, interview process, even just that part.

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Then starting the job.

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And then moving on into our personal lives, because all of those things are what being an adult-iest adults really means, OK, so next slide, please.

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So, everyone tells you, when you finished college, you're supposed to get a job right away. And that's all, they just say, get a job. They know more instruction about what that is. They also don't really talk about what that really entails. I mean, if you've done an internship, you kind of know, and then they're, like, if you just get an internship, you're totally going to get a job and get hired from those people. Don't worry about it.

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But there's just a lot of pieces all the time that you're supposed to be managing, all while doing all your classwork. So let's kinda start with the challenges of getting a job, Molly. When we've been working together, working on all the multiple applications, and things like that, But what do you think were some of the most wherever, It looks from, the biggest challenge and frustrations that we've been talking about?

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I would say some of the biggest things are, in terms of when you're actually looking at the job postings, knowing what fits your skills and qualifications, just because, um, you know some job postings list things as preferences versus requirements when they're not really requirements, um, and then things like timelines.

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So, waiting for companies, get back to you, some of them will get back to you within a couple of weeks. Some of them will take months.

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Yeah, I think, objectively, job applicant like job descriptions are written, so vaguely, and then, you know, you find out women and neurodivergent people,

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technically, like anyone who is not like a cis het white men usually won't apply for things unless they meet like 70% of what they're asking. A good way to think about that is that job descriptions are like Christmas lists. You don't actually get everything you want. It's just, let's say these are all the things we want, and, you know, people pick and choose which ones qualify for them, and then they put them all out there.

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I feel like that's a really hard concept to grasp, just because if you're doing a job, you want to be able to do it well, right.

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I messed up my screen, sorry, everybody. The next thing is, so, let's say you have successfully done the application. They have followed timelines, we knew the right time, you know that medium amount of time you're supposed to wait before returning a phone call, and following up on e-mails versus doing it too quickly, or too fast. Let's talk about interviews.

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I feel like, Molly, we've gone round and round talking about, like, what the actual purpose of interviews are, and, like, what are we supposed to be doing in them? My favorite question is, tell me about yourself.

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Yeah.

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So, what challenges have we kinda talked about? And, like, I guess, also, I didn't say this before, but successes that we've talked about with job application, I mean interviews.

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I would say my biggest frustration is just that interviews are less about your actual answer to the question, and it's more about sort of marketing yourself.

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And it's kind of a charisma test, which I'm not always great at, there's a lot of pressure there. I think that ambiguity about what you're actually being evaluated on is...

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Hmm.

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There's lot of pressure there.

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And then, in terms of, I think, has gone well with the interview process, I think, um, internship interviews have given me a lot of practice.

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And then, also just trying to take the pressure off myself, in terms of, like, applying to a lot of jobs so that I have a lot of opportunities.

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Because I know that there's some that, I might just get nervous, and even if I am qualified for it, I might mess up the job interview, because I am nervous. So, just saying that I'm going to go in there.

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And I'm just going to do my best, and attempt to do better that way.

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Yeah.

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I think something my dad always told me is that you always take the interview. And so, applying for all the jobs, something to remember, and I think we've talked about this a lot of, it really doesn't matter if you want that job 100%, if you're interested in it and think you could do it for even a short period of time, apply for it.

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Because what is actually saying in in the job description, what happens in the interview doesn't always also reflect what actually the job is. And it is always easier to get a job once you have a job. It's a great catch 22 there.

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I think, I really agree with what you said about marketing yourself.

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And it's almost like, how you're saying the answer and how you're presenting yourself is more important than what you're actually saying in the interview, which seems so counter-intuitive, because you're supposed to be trying to fill a position of the qualities of the person, like, let's try that again. The skills of the person, versus, like, Do I want to have dinner or drinks with them? Right, OK, next slide, please.

7:07

I muted myself. I really I should be really much better at not muting or unmuting myself this far along since 2020, but here we are. OK, so congratulations You have aced the application, gotten through the grueling interview process, and now we have started our jobs.

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I have yet to think of something since Kindergarten, where being taught what to do actually involved doing the skill of the class. Like, OK, everyone, line up now, you to do this? Now you do that.

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So I guess, Molly, you've had three different professional experiences. I have not, I mean, I guess I started this job about four years ago, but I have not had, like, the first college job experience since a long time ago. I imagine, it's very different now. What has kind of been your experience with the different onboarding? And I guess I'm also very curious about, between, you had the government positions and then the private sector positions.

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And if you found anything better with either one. I would say my experiences have been very mixed.

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Some of them give you a lot of information, some of them give you very little information, some of it...

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The information is like directly related to what you'll do.

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Others, they talk a lot, but none of it is like helpful to what you'll be doing.

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So it's, it's been a pretty big mix.

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I found that the government ones were a little bit more specific, I have one in the mayor's office that was, they had a lot of very specific information that they train you on, what you'll be doing and the best way to do it and sort of like, you know, Plan Bs and Cs and all of that.

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Versus my most recent internship in financial services, there were sort of no timelines, no goals. The onboarding was not related to your field, it was just related to the company, in general, so much more vague.

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Yeah, I've tended, I've worked in both private and public sector. And I would agree that, like, looking at, from that perspective of, when I'm starting a job, the only thing we talk about is here are your benefits. Which health plan would you like to select? Also, if you're going to miss work, this is how you do it. It's very HR and procedure based.

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And I think, it feels like, then, I, one, don't know what I'm actually supposed to be expected to do. And then two, I feel, like, every job I've started, I've had to ask what the accommodation process is. I don't always necessarily need accommodations.

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But it's nice to know how I would actually go about getting them, if I do need them.

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I feel like, even though there's that HR thing, it's a very small, like, little blurred part of it. Right? Has it ever been made clear to you, Molly? How to go through the accommodation process? If you were going to access the network?

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I can't say that, that has ever been mentioned to me.

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Yeah.

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It's like, almost people want to be like, I don't wanna assume anything, and it's just, also, that makes it less accessible and more difficult, because, you know, coming in higher ed, we're told, OK, do you need accommodations? And every single syllabus, every professor says it out loud. When students started struggling, one of the things professors sometimes gently will ask is like, Oh, have you gone to the Office of Disability Services? Or here are all the things that are available. And then you go to the real-world, I guess, OK, college is real too, we're not in the matrix. But, like, when you go into the professional setting, it's, all of a sudden, no one wants to help you find the access to the things that will make things more accessible. The other thing I think is like hidden agendas when you start a job, I know the most recent, what's it called, internship you had? They'd had you kinda like paired up with someone to kind of talk about, like how to better, in a gesture, like how to do the things in the job.

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Did they talk to you about, like, what the social expectations at work were at all?

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A little bit, I did find that to be very helpful.

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I think, in a position where you're not given a lot of information, it's good to have someone to go to.

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But obviously, then the prerogative is put on you to ask questions, rather than, you know, things being presented to you. And you might not always know what questions to ask.

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Yeah, I feel like when everyone, when anyone ever asks, Do you have any questions? I have so many questions in my head, but I can't determine what is the appropriate question to ask. And is a question I'm thinking of. Is that the appropriate question to ask right now, or who do I ask?

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I've, I feel like when I was working for government positions, I had a very clear hierarchy of, like, who I was supposed to go to you for what, and that made me feel much more comfortable. I'm somebody who gets very anxious if I don't have the information I need and then I panic if I don't know who to ask for it.

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I also wish that someone would tell me what the policy for birthdays are in offices because I feel like everybody does it differently.

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And I think so much of being successful in any career is that piece that happens outside of work, or that piece that happens not directly reflective of the work you're doing. But when there was, like, there was someone's birthday, or there was a celebration at work or someone went to some golf outing, I don't know how to golf, so I'm in trouble there.

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But, you know, that's where those connections are being made. And that's when people are deciding, oh, I want that person on my team.

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I feel like part of onboarding would be great to say, here, what do you want to do for your career path?

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Like, what, how do you want to be, like, moving through this company?

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And, I think, finding a way to ask someone that, like, who is the person I talked to you about, what my goals are, would be super helpful. I know I didn't plan for this. This is just a rant I came up with last night. And though the night about helping people better plan their career path with that company. You can add any thoughts to that if you want, Molly, you don't have to.

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I think you got it all.

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I muted myself again. All right. Next slide.

13:24

OK, so everyone talks about this allusive work-life balance. I'm a working parent. I still don't know what that actually means.

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But I also feel like there's this concept among neurotypicals of this medium amount of everything. So you don't want to do too little one thing or too much of another. There's like this unspoken medium amount.

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However, it feels like, then, we're not doing everything well, Like, you know, when you're in school, when you're doing classes, you can like, OK, I'm going to do really well on all these exams.

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“And then when those are done, then I can go hang out with friends, do whatever.” But it feels like, in the world of work, work is never done, because that's why we have jobs.

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So, what have you found, I mean, especially this summer, about, like, finding that balance between work, and not work and doing fun things.

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Yeah, that's, that's huge. I would say

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So my previous two internships were during, my first two internships were during the school year.

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And having that balance between work, internship, and social life, it felt fairly intuitive, maybe difficult, but it made sense.

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But, this internship was, you know, your standard 40 hours a week, and suddenly, yeah, things were so much more difficult.

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I, it feels like the 40 hours is 24 hours a day.

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So, I can see how it'd be very difficult to transition into that, and then just figuring out how to make it work.

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You would think that having to study full-time, and if you are working also, like, when you're taking 15, 16, or whatever credits, plus, then you have your job on campus, you're like, "Yeah. I know how to balance that." But working 40 hours a week, man, and it is exhausting.

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I mean, in theory, it sounds like it should be less hard because it's like, "oh, I'm just going to work, I don't have to study, I don't have to do that thing." But switching from having class at 10 and then maybe another class at two is very difficult to now "I have to have sustained attention, shifting different priorities based on a whim between the hours of for pretend, 8 and 4 or whatever." Right?

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I feel like that's something we've talked about, a lot on how to build that stamina and how to do those things. And we'll kind of talk about some strategies for that in a little bit.

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But, do you think you were prepared, like this summer, do you think you were prepared at all for like what that was going to be like versus how you've experienced internships before?

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Um, I knew, the thing is I knew it was going to be rough.

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So in that sense, yes, but in terms of like actually experiencing it, I was just exhausted a lot.

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I feel like, on paper, it shouldn't be that rough because, I mean, right now, I'm not as involved in as many activities, but I'm still, of course, working. Right now

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It's like 12 hours a week. But like in the past, I've been involved with three different activities a week and then working 10 hours a week and then have, you know, 18 credit hours.

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And so it shouldn't be that difficult of a transition.

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But I think the fact that you're doing the same thing for eight hours, every single day. Probably in the same place. Maybe it's a desk or eight hours a day, around the same people makes it a lot more exhausting.

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Yeah. When you put it like that, it's like, "wow, that is very different than school", right? Even though school might be more challenging in sense of, "I have to do this class, and then I have to do all these different executive functioning, moving tasks." When you're doing the same thing, and the same people, and then, especially, if you're working on a team of people, right, and you have to wait for each next step, and it's hard to know how to balance your, your time, your energy, your focus, because of the nature of work.

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Versus I feel like when you're in school you have so much more predictability in terms of how to "use your spoons", as they say right?

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What about, Molly, I know you have a pretty good, like nice social circle here at Marquette? Do you have any concerns about like how you might find your social sources after you graduate?

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That's definitely going to be a big focus for me.

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I know that finding social circles, really building a strong one is going to be very important to that transition, in terms of just, you know, having something to look forward to outside of work, having people to talk to you about everything that's going on, that sort of thing.

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So, I think that's going to be huge and right now I'm already thinking about you know ways to find that group. I'm taking a ballet class at Marquette right now, since it's my last semester I wanted to take a fun class. So I'm thinking of you know maybe I could take a ballet class in the city, so that sort of thing.

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So I know that it'll be really important to have that social group.

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Yeah, and I think that you've found the finding structured things that exist that are already in the community means it's easier to make social connections. And you already have a built-in shared interests, so.

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OK, next slide, please.

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OK, so this has been a hot topic and everyone has heard about Neurodiversity hiring initiatives. I've worked with a lot of them, and some of them have been really great to work with, but I guess my question is, I feel like no one has ever really asked the question to autistic or other forms of neurodivergent individuals'. What does that even mean? When you hear, if an employer says under their DEI initiatives, "we are neurodivergent friendly" or we are "friendly to autistic people", what would you actually expect that to look like?

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I think the two biggest things are being proactive.

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So, as we mentioned, accommodations earlier, you know, just asking, having an HR person asked, do you need accommodations And then

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Secondly, I think some basic expectation or understanding that employees, and this doesn't just apply to neurodivergent employees, but all employees have different methods for success.

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So Emily and I were kind of talking about this previously, but in college, if a student said, you know, "I like to work and do my homework in the morning, and I'd like to listen music while I do it". You know, everyone gets that, everyone understands that people have different methods.

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They have a system that works for them.

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But when, once you're in the workforce, suddenly you're expected to all work.

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Oftentimes, in the same room, you know, in the same lighting, at the same desk, with the same computers, same software, at the same times, like, there's so much less flexibility and there's so much less understanding with the way that people work and what works for them.

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Oh my gosh, yes. I also feel like, you know, you're not, when people say autism like, "oh, yes, really good, math and science." And I didn't get the autism that makes me good at math or science.

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So, nuts, sucks to be me. But, like, the field seems to be very much tech based. And I don't feel like for you, Molly, with your areas of interest and in where you really excel, like that it doesn't really align with you, either your interests. Right?

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Yeah, I've gotten, I'd say, more interested in it, but it's not, it's not an affinity for me. Yes.

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So I think, thinking about, like, when you're looking at those hiring initiatives, if you're going to consider those as a source of employment, because it might make that transition easier for the reasons that Molly said, because it might be, they can be more of more flexible, you're not doing the same thing same time, everybody else. More appealing, more fitting for that piece.

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There's also the drawback of sometimes, maybe you might feel "othered" more than we might already feel in life, and then also kind of being limited by the fields in the companies they're in. But there are some benefits that might make that transition into



the workforce feel a little less jarring. I know Molly, you haven't participated in any of those.

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But as you express, like, that's been kind of kind of a lot, of the going back and forth.

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Yeah, my next slide, please.

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OK, so we've talked a lot about, "This is not great, this is awful,

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We don't really know what to do." I'm going to change the tune and talk about opportunities. The first thing to remember is that you can be kind to yourself. This is a transition. Change is hard for everybody, and if you haven't noticed, being in college, it's four years,

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Four plus years of one big transition. The first one is "how do I even do college?" Then it's like, "All right. I understand exactly what to do, how to do college", and then you get a new semester with new professors, with new expectations: new roommates, new, whatever. New internships, nothing has been super, super consistent while you're in college, no matter what you kind of try to tell yourself. And then, you're now going into this big, unknown thing and it's hard and it's unknown.

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And it's OK for it to be awkward and hard and you aren't the only one feeling that way, Everybody's feeling that way. Autistic, ADHD-ers, neurotypical people, everyone's feeling like, "man, there's a lot of pressure. I should be doing this."

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Second of all, you have an opportunity to learn what works for you, and learn what strategies work for you. There are strategies that work really well at school that might not transition into the world of work, but there are some that do so.

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I know, Molly, something that you like to do is, you know, what your limits are, in terms of, that's not even procrastination. It's just, I know my workload and I've worked best this way. And it's effective.

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And in places of business, they call that "sprinting" where they do really hard work, take a break, do really hard work.

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And I think you said something that to me that really resonated was like, I just gave myself permission to stop feeling guilty about procrastination.

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You can talk about that, sorry. Yeah.

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That was like, huge I, I would say, all throughout high school

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And in college, I was always stressed about getting work done. And I was, like, "ok, if I would just stop procrastinating, I would stop feeling so stressed".

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And then, one day, I realized, "OK, am I stressed, because I'm procrastinating or stressed, because I've been told, procrastinating is bad."

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Because

23:48

I always got the work done, and I was always getting good grades, and so I was like, Is there anything wrong with this system?

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And so one day, I said, "OK, I'm gonna just, except that this is my system. I'm just going to keep doing it like this. But I've got to stop feeling bad about it."

24:04

I continued to get the work done. I continue to get good grades, but I just stopped feeling so stressed all the time.

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So that was a huge change to my system.

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Right! I think, acknowledging that how you do things doesn't have to be how everybody else does it. Now, to be clear, so no one thinks we are saying, procrastination is the best, Molly's form of procrastination works really well.

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Because you're still meeting deadlines, you're not holding up group projects, (or) anything . It is just that you are being able to do work on your own timeline.

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I also didn't prep you (for) this question, but I just want to check that, like, using that, taking that mindset into internships has also been successful for you?

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I would definitely say it has, I don't know.

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The thing is, it's not really the kind of thing you could talk about with employers, because, like we've talked about, they're not really understanding of people systems.

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But the reality is, is that if I'm given a deadline for something, and I meet it using my own system, it has always been effective for me.

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I will say that a lot of oh, excuse me. Sorry. I would say many of, most employers, what they really care about is the bottom line. And did you meet the outcome in that, in that deadline?

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So while they want you to do something in a certain way, as long as you're meeting that outcome, I think usually you can fly under the radar to an extent. But finding out those strategies that work with you, and don't be afraid to kind of go into those things that people have always told you are "bad".

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Again, if you are meeting deadlines, doing your thing and you're thinking about the reason why you might be stressed and, again, for Molly, it was because everyone else's expectations were, "this is wrong, don't do this", but it worked for her Molly's brain is.

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Then, my third opportunity is, it is different. It's a different process. Not a unique process.

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The hesitancy to be like everybody's different, but more every graduating college student

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Is theoretically going through these exact same stages, right? Everyone is expected to go to class full-time. Maybe have an internship, and also at the same time be aggressively, and applying, and interviewing, and even accepting and then negotiating job offers, all while trying to finish Capstone projects, hanging out with your friends, finding new places to live, figuring out what all those things mean on this very condensed timeline.

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Everybody's going through the same thing, and so it's okay to, my narrative goals are kind of along the lines of, you know, fake it, till you make it.

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I'm not good at that as you may have picked up on by now, but, like Volley, the approach to it for autistic students might be different, or it will be a unique, sorry, it will be different. It doesn't necessarily mean what you're doing is unique, everyone is having that same experience.

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Um, anything to say about that?

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I don't really have anything to add, I think you've got it.

27:05

Okay, and so the other thing is, um, I said this a long time ago, like, way in the beginning, that, one of the key indicators of getting a job as having a job. Right?

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So, and we talked about applying for all the jobs, and all the jobs, all of them, that you might be even be qualified for and not hate doing, because your first job does not have to be your last.

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That does also mean, the caveat of that is that also means you do have to go through the application and the interview process and everything else.

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We probably also don't want to have a new job every six months, but one of the best ways to combat to combat the unemployment rate, um, is to land a job before you graduate and start that job.

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And find ways to be like, not find ways to be successful, and try it out.

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And if it is awful, you can get a new job.

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I shouldn't, I'm not make trying to make it sound very easy, but knowing that, like in school, you kind of have to finish school to get a degree. And if you don't get a degree, then you can't do the thing you want to do with your degree.

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Once you have a job, it's kind of, you can take elements you like at that job and then pick what makes more sense for me in the future. I don't know if anyone has ever said this, you have your permission, you have permission to change your mind at any point in time. I have had, I changed my major, in college

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at least six times. I've changed careers, like, not just jobs, like careers, four times, and I'm 41.

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And I say that to say, what we think is always going to happen doesn't always end up how it is.

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Um and giving yourself permission to embrace the fact that you might be, it is scary, embrace that there is so much unknown, and how, like, coping strategies to work through that piece.

29:02

Um, so I guess Molly it's another question I set ahead of time. I'm sorry.

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Thinking about what I just said in terms of how you're looking at this job search.

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Yes, it'd be great if you found a forever job, but you're also open to, this might be my first job, and then moving into new things. How are you working through a lot of that uncertainty right now?

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I will say, yeah, when I first got to college, I wanted my first job to be the job I was like, so stuck on that.

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But I think the closer I get to it, the more I'm realizing, especially with internships, realizing that there are so many jobs out there, and it's really, really, really, really hard to learn about jobs without, you know, getting closer to them.

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I think it's difficult to even, you know, make a decision on what to major in, because it's really hard to know what jobs are like until you're out there, you know, working alongside them.

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So, I've gotten much more comfortable with the fact that, you know, you just have to get a job and then you may meet a co-worker who has a job, that, you know, is similar to yours, but maybe it's closer to your interests.

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And I'm getting, yeah. I'm learning that that might be a more effective way to learn about jobs and what's a better fit.

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Also, I want to point out that that is a very perfect way to go about employment. That's how a lot of people do get raises, or how they decide to find the field that makes the most sense for them as they start in one position.

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And then, even if they stay in the same company, move into a different position, or they, again, might leave the company and go into a position, that's super similar.

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I feel like I'm supposed to be thing something else right now.

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Hold on, let me the amount, okay.

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Okay, my next slide, because I want to leave lots of time for questions, because it's just such a weird topic. Oh, yeah, so that is kind of like the basis of our conversation, and kinda where we went, and I'm kind of hoping to use this time for people to ask questions

31:01

to me, are Molly, about, specifically, how to support you and ideas that you might have. Have at it in the questions.

31:11

Well, thank you, Emily and Molly. This concludes the presentation portion and begins the Q&A session of today's webinar. As a reminder, you can still submit your questions through the questions pane in your control panel. Because our time is limited, we may not be able to get through all your questions, and if there are any questions that we don't get to today, we'll try to get back to you by e-mail. So, let's start with Molly. Our first question is: What strategies and systems have you found useful?

31:42

Uh, sorry, is that strategies and systems for finding a job, or? That's on me, strategies and systems in assisting you working through this transition and also like at jobs.

31:56

Um, I would say, as I mentioned before, like just accepting that we all have a unique system for getting things done and sort of embracing mine.

32:06

Um and then also as I mentioned before, finding a social circle.

32:13

So, um embracing my circle here at Marquette, in terms of

32:17

Emily at On Your Marq, and then my friends and then my parents back at home.

32:22

I'm texting them, calling them. And then moving into getting a job, I know that building that social circle, but also staying in touch with my current one, will be huge.

32:34

Oh yeah, that reminds me, we had a really big conversation about like knowing who your people are and how that is one thing that is going to help you feel like you are super engaged in your community, but also that you always remember who you are and like feeling confident in what you're doing.

32:52

Fantastic. Alright. This next question: Charisma test, yes. Would disclosure of autism prior to the interview be helpful?

33:01

So, this is a question, is an age-old question. I wish I had the correct answer all the time.

33:08

I feel like, I, I know for a fact that I am a socially awkward human being, and I will disclose it to the HR if I know the process. Let me try again. I will disclose it to HR to say, hey, it would be helpful for me to have this accommodation

33:28

during the interview, if I could have the questions ahead of time, um and know kind of the format. From that perspective, yes!

33:35

If it is a company whose culture, you can find out they might be a little more old-school and stiff,

33:42

I would not disclose. If it's one that, based on, if you went to like a career fair and everything else and you know the culture is kind of a little bit more accepting. I've had students who drop it into interview questions.

33:55

I've had students say in there um what's it called a cover letter, that, that is a thing, that they've done and been employed and been great.

34:04

So, the answer is, it depends, um versus absolutely do it.

34:12

I think if you are someone who struggles to, do the format charisma piece of an interview,

34:21

there are ways to disclose if you've set that, once you can like, kind of see, the interview may not be going well, because of that piece, not basically what you're saying. I have lots of thoughts on that. Um reach out to me. We can talk about it more.

34:34

For your personal, your specific situation. Sorry.

34:38

So this question is for Molly. What advice do you have for recent and soon to be graduates/job seekers?

34:48

Um, I mean, I guess I would just go back to the things that I've previously mentioned about, um, the support network being the biggest thing, But also, I mean, it is, a lot of, it's a numbers game.

35:04

I think, yeah, I've talked about this with Emily just applying to a lot of jobs.

35:09

Um, and then not putting too much pressure on, um, you know, applying to, finding a job that you really like and you really want and then trying to like nail the interview. Just, you know, going into each one with that.

35:24

You know, I hope this goes well.

35:25

It's kind of just preparing for it the best you can, but not putting too much pressure on each and every one.

35:33

Because, as we've also talked about, you know, finding a job is the most important thing, and then it's always going to get easier after you have that experience.

35:43

So, just sort of looking for the jobs that you know, you are a good enough fit. You know, you are willing to work and everything that are applicable to you.

35:57

And then from there, just sort of being open to how it all gets. Similar to kind of like applying for college when you apply for all the colleges, then you have your safety schools and your dream schools.

36:13

Alright, I think this question looks like it'd be for both of you. How did you, it's a two parter as well.

36:20

How did you find a system at work that worked for you, and advocate for yourself with your supervisor, so they understood what you need?

36:30

Molly, I can go first as a seasoned professional.

36:33

So, for me, I discovered that I hold a lot of information here.

36:39

And then, when I tried to do it out loud, it comes out a jumbled mess a lot.

36:44

So, in my office, not anymore, I had giant like whiteboards that had different sticky notes all over it to kind of organize the different thoughts and my brain. There was a flaw to that system because paper kept falling down. But I realized what it is is that I need to have visual reminders of what my train of thought is. I need to have visual reminders of what I'm supposed to be doing, even if it isn't a novel tasks, even if it's a routine, I needed to have something physically to remind myself.

37:13

And so now I have a piece of technology, it's called books Boox, and instead of having 15 million, not literal, but like legal pads with all those things around my office, they all live in one little kind of kindle shaped thing.

37:29

I found that out through

37:30

trial and error, because I, in my brain, would say, I would say, okay, I'm going to write this curriculum. And I would spend one week running, six, like a semester and a half worth of curriculum for four different sections of a course.

37:44

And that sounds wild. And then I would get burnt out. And then I realized, the only reason I was doing it that way is because if I didn't do it right away, I would never get it done. So, thinking about the functions behind your current systems, and what might be more efficient is kinda how I did that first part. And then the second piece about advocating for myself.

38:06

With my first, most jobs, and Molly you can say if this is not your experience, you have a meeting with your immediate supervisor at some point during your onboarding.

38:14

And I have gotten used to the fact, if I don't speak up for myself, no one else will.

38:22

And so I'll say, hey, your, the best way to work for me is this. I also need to know if I have a question, do you want me to write it down? Do you want me to e-mail it to you? Do you want me to ask you, I don't want to be annoying, but I will have a lot of questions right away.

38:39

And then, I also noticed I ask a lot questions that seem like I was maybe challenging their authority or why they, their processes. And so, I very clearly just said, if I'm asking questions, usually I'm asking so that I can understand the function of something so that I

can do it, how you're doing it, or we can think about how we can be more innovative with it.

39:00

If it comes off as I'm challenging you, please let me know, so I can restate my question.

39:05

I've had supervisor say, I've never had anybody directly communicate what their needs are, and that's been super great for them, so, yeah.

39:13

Um, I don't know if that will be helpful for you.

39:16

It's worked for me repeatedly in my career, Molly's turn.

39:23

Speaking of reminders, could you repeat the question?

39:28

Oh yeah, can we send it over to molly? It says, how do you find a system at work that worked for you,

39:35

and then advocate for yourself with your supervisor so they understood what you need?

39:39

Thank you, Emily.

39:42

Um yeah, my biggest system, by far, is note taking of all sorts. Um, to-do lists, being the biggest one.

39:50

Um, similarly, if I don't write it down, I will not remember it. It doesn't have to be visible, it just has to all be together in one place.

39:59

Um, and then advocating, I would say, I'm not great at, uh, being super proactive about things. Um but I, once I realize there's a problem, I, I do like to address it as soon as possible. Um and sometimes, for me, that means sending an e-mail because I find it difficult to do face-to-face things for some topics. Um but that has always worked for me.

40:31

Alright, this next question is for Molly. I know the job search can be quite painful, especially in areas that are outside of the medical fields and hard sciences, example, Biochem Physics. I have a Ph.D. in special education, and I'm having difficulty finding employment. Are you having difficulties finding employment in your field of economics? What sorts of jobs have you applied for?

40:57

Um, so, the jobs I'm applying for right now are all fairly, they all have like analysts in the name, so, I'm not exactly sure how I guess the perception of my personality fits with that or anything like that.

41:15

Um, like by employers.

41:20

Um but I guess, I would say, in previous jobs, I've, I've definitely had to, sort of, uh, like we're saying with interviews, you know, some of them go well, some of them don't.

41:35



Um and I've found that, you know, the ones where they really expect you to have a certain kind of personality. You can tell in the interview when it's going well, when it's not pretty immediately, but I think sometimes you just have to keep interviewing.

41:51

And one of those interviews will just, fortunately, go well.

41:55

And after you get in there, you know, they're going to see you as a whole person and not just you as an interview. Um, and that's, you know, how that has sort of worked for me.

42:08

I'm not sure about your specific situation, maybe Emily can speak more on that.

42:14

Um something that immediately came to mind for my mind is, people see Ph.D. and what they perceive with Ph.D., which is so weird to me how people have ideas of what that means.

42:26

Um and another thing I've thought about is, um, policy, and looking at, this is not the question you asked, but I immediately thought was like, someone who has a Ph.D. in special ed, and the state of special ed.

42:41

I'm going to go on a rant, right now, having somebody who actually understands how not neurotypical brains work, how autistic brains work, like that would be phenomenal and policy-driving things.

42:55

Um, sorry that's not the question you asked, but my brain eventually got very excited about that.

42:58

Um, let me.

43:03

Hmm, that was my thing.

43:06

I'm gonna say go ahead and ask the question, because I can't see it, and I'll just take the risk.

43:11

Okay, let's see here. I have one here that probably be answered by both of you. What resources during college can help you find internships?

43:26

Molly, do you wanna go first, or do you want me to do it?

43:32

Sorry, um, so, one thing that we've done is go to job fairs, but honestly, I'm gonna be honest, I haven't found them very helpful.

43:41

Um, I think our school has a website called Handshake, which I think is specifically, it's a job listing platform I think specifically geared towards colleges.

43:53

And I feel like that has been the most helpful to me in terms of finding things that are actually applicable to my situation.

44:01

Um, I know, so, the first internship I got was [inaudible]

44:08

Emily helped me get it because she because she knew someone who worked in City hall.

44:15

And at that point, basically, I didn't really know what I wanted to do in terms of internships. But she was encouraging me to, you know, get one anyway.

44:24

And then the second one, my supervisor at that internship, um I think, wrote or not wrote a recommendation, but was a, you know recommend me for. But otherwise I just applied for it on their website.

44:40

The third one, I applied for it through Handshake.

44:45

Um, I think one way to find internships and things during, and like job opportunities during college, aside from looking at like Handshake. You pay tuition at a university that has a career center. They are obligated to serve all of their students.

45:03

What I have found, and I guess I'm a professional coming to them as a professional, is that they generally want to do their job well. But, as Molly said, like, I knew somebody in, in City Hall, and I was, like, ooh, you guys are looking for interns.

45:20

Part of it is, a lot of it is, just being, knowing what conversations are happening and knowing what's going on.

45:27

Government agencies are phenomenal resources for internships.

45:32

Non-profit organizations have a lot of internships.

45:36

Large sports organizations have internships in ways that I didn't even think were actual internships.

45:43

I think one was like, like not volunteer engagement, but like social responsibility internship kind of things.

45:51

I think looking in places you may not have considered or be interested in is one way to do it too.

45:58

Um and then, I think Handshake is good. What else have I done? I've literally Googled internships, and fill in whatever city, and lots of stuff will come up. And some are good, some are not so good.

46:16

Or just, I've e-mailed, I've had students have success. There was a company they wanted to intern with, and they sent an e-mail saying, "I'm wondering what your internship cycle was, would be," and they responded, "Oh, here's the information".

46:29

I don't remember if they got that one or not, but it was cool to see that by taking that initiative, the company responded within, like, a couple of weeks.

46:38

So, being a little assertive, doesn't, it doesn't hurt.

46:43

I also just want to add, although my first one was a connection, you really don't need an Emily Raclaw to have that sort of experience. A lot of professors are very happy to help, with that sort of thing. And I've had professors send e-mails about internships.

46:59

But, um, If you ask them, and they know that you're looking for an internship. A lot of them are more than happy to help, And it's also a numbers game.

47:10

So, like my most recent internship, I think I applied to like 11, and got interviews for two, then ultimately got one.

47:19

And that's actually typical statistics for job applications, too. The same thing applies to research opportunities.

47:26

Let your professors know, let your advisor know. Tell everybody. The more people don't know what you're looking for, if you don't share that information, too.

47:36

Something just like, I have students who have like a form e-mail, they will send out figuring out what it is you're looking for. Call it an elevator, pitch, whatever.

47:43

And share that with faculty, staff, et cetera.

47:50

Alright, Molly, this is sort of on the same vein, but this time for preparing for interviews. Do you have any best practices that you could share when it comes to preparing for interviews?

48:03

I will say, so, with On Your Marq we prepared for like specific questions.

48:07

And I feel like with questions that are a little bit more vague, like, "Tell me about yourself", that's very helpful, otherwise, I get very rambling.

48:19

But I think for some of the more specific ones, like the "Name a time when" things like that.

48:27

First of all, those questions are just very hard.

48:30

And, and you can't always really prepare for them, because there are so many different versions of that question that you cannot prepare for every answer.

48:40

So, instead, I sort of like to, before the interview, take time to think about my previous experiences.

48:47

So, you know, going through my resume thinking about sort of things that I did at my internships and did with my leadership opportunities at Marquette, things I did in my classes.

48:58

You know connections that I made and projects that I did, that sort of thing.

49:04

So, they'll have those sort of things ready to go.

49:07

You know, always make sure I have my resume in front of me during it.

49:13

Um, and apart from that, I think just really making sure that I'm not, I've said this 10 times, but that, I'm not putting too much pressure on myself. That I'm staying relaxed and just letting it kind of go how it goes.

49:24

That always turns out the best.

49:28

I'd agree. I think something to remember is that with, just like joining conversations or like talking to random people, there's like 50% acceptance, or like, chance that you will have a success connection. Job interviews. We already know that what they're looking for and what they put down, may not even, even if you give the best interview of your life, they might pick somebody else for a reason that has nothing to do with you.

49:54

And yeah, Molly, strategies are phenomenal and great, and that, I think we also talked about how keeping in mind that not everybody is super honest. When they ask those questions of, "Tell me a time when?"

50:07

So that's something to keep in mind, that when you can't think of something very specifically, it can be a combination, how you answer that question can be a combination of situations that help answer that question.

50:18

Because what they're asking is not what happened in that situation.

50:22

They're trying to assess your skillset for that, if that kind of situation were to arise.

50:30

Well, we have, it looks like we have run out of time for any more questions. Is there anything that you each would like to say in closing before I do my closeout?

50:38

I would just like to thank everybody for coming, and I hope that this was normalizing, somewhat helpful.

50:46

Again, we're all going through it.

50:47

Well not me, I'm old now but you're going through it, everyone's going through it together.

50:51

It is a very, it can be a painful and stressful process, but there can be success, trust yourself and you know yourself best, and you're an expert on yourself.

51:04

Okay, perfect. Well, thank you, Emily and Molly. And thank you everyone for joining us today. If you found today's event helpful, we encourage you to register for OAR's next



webinar event, The Autism Inclusion in the Workplace Panel on October 12th from 10 AM to 11 AM Eastern Time. Once you close out of today's event, you will receive an exit survey. We would appreciate it if you would complete that and provide your feedback. Everyone will receive a follow-up e-mail today with their certificate of attendance. On behalf of the Organization for Autism Research, thank you for joining us, and have a great rest of your day.

51:38

Thank you so much, both of you.

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