



Key Findings from the National Autism Indicators Report: Vocational Rehabilitation

This fact sheet summarizes key findings from the National Autism Indicators Report: Vocational Rehabilitation, which is at drexel.lu/autismindicators16. The National Autism Indicators Report tracks statistics about issues facing individuals on the autism spectrum. These statistics set the stage to discover whether quality of life for those with autism and their families is improving over time.

Characteristics of VR service users with autism

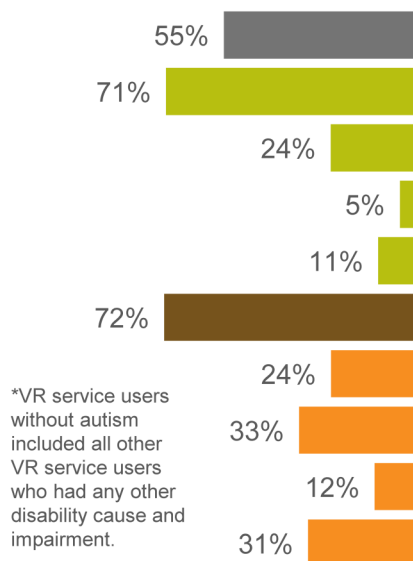
A total of 17,753 individuals with autism had a case with vocational rehabilitation services that closed in federal fiscal year (FFY) 2014. This group of people with autism equaled 3.2% of all VR cases that closed in FFY 2014. Approximately two-thirds of this autism group received VR services before their cases closed. This report looks into the demographic and impairment characteristics of VR services users with and without autism.

Most users were male and white.

VR service users with autism averaged 22 years of age at the time of application (range 12-69 years). Nearly half (46%) were high school students at the time of application, and almost all (94%) of these high school students were receiving special education services through an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or accommodations via a 504 plan. Compared to VR service users without autism, those who had autism were more often male, white, and age 21 or younger.

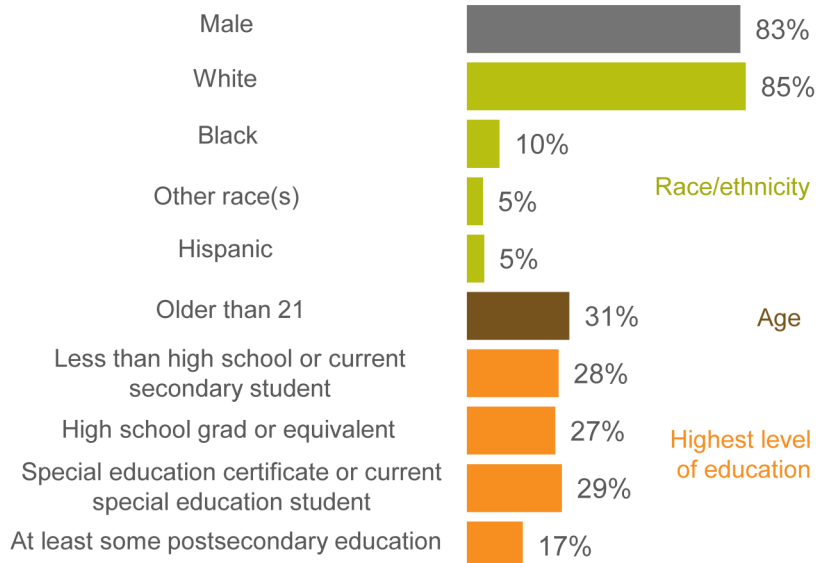
More VR service users with autism were male and younger compared to those without autism, and fewer had some postsecondary education.

VR service users without autism*



*VR service users without autism included all other VR service users who had any other disability cause and impairment.

VR service users with autism



Race/ethnicity

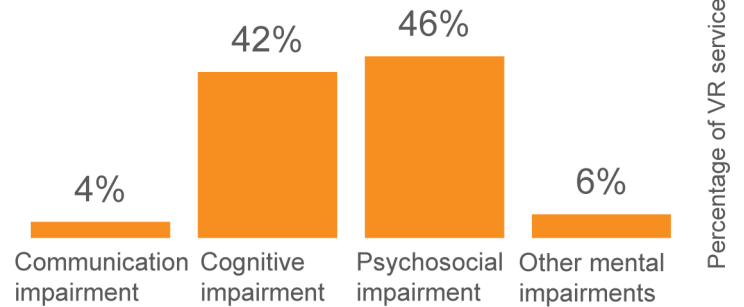
Age

Highest level of education

Demographic and impairment characteristics

All of the VR service users included in this report had autism as their primary or secondary disability. This means that the VR counselor considered autism to be the main impairment that caused or resulted in significant difficulty getting or keeping a job. Most VR services users with autism had primary mental impairments in cognitive and psychosocial skills.

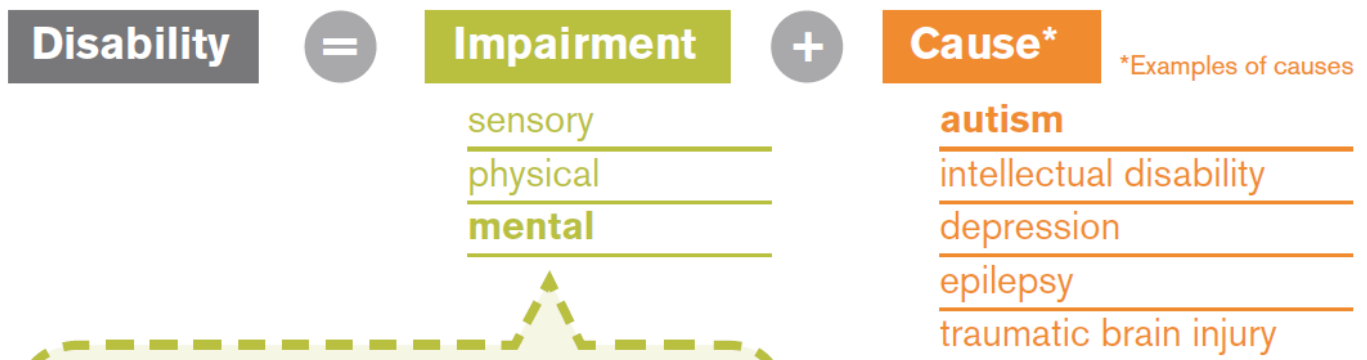
Cognitive and psychosocial impairments were the most common sources of job impediments.



Source: Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA-911), FFY 2014

Understanding how disabilities are classified in VR

VR counselors assign two code for the type of disability a person has—an **impairment** (reason that employment is difficult) and a **cause** (the underlying condition that causes the impairment).



Mental impairment was the most common type of impairment for VR service users with autism. The most common specific impairments included:

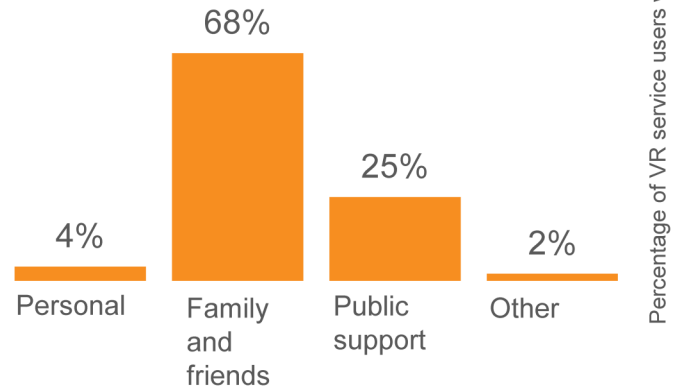
- cognitive impairments that involve learning, thinking, processing information, and concentration
- psychosocial impairments that are interpersonal or behavioral in nature and involve difficulty coping
- other mental impairments

Adapted from: Nye-Lengerman, K.M. (2015). *Predicting Vocational Rehabilitation Employment Outcomes for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest. (3733258)

VR applicants do not usually support themselves financially

Two-thirds of VR applicants with autism had family or friends as their primary source of financial support. One-quarter received public financial support as their primary source of support, and four percent were their own primary source of financial support. This chart depicts the primary source of support, some individuals may have received financial support from more than one of these sources.

The most common source of financial support at VR application was family and friends.



Source: Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA-911), FFY 2014

What was happening at the time of application for VR services?

Approximately 10% of individuals had a job at the time of application for VR services. These individuals who had a job may have been in need of VR supports to maintain that job. The vast majority lived at home in a private residence. Nearly 70% were receiving financial support from family and friends. Nearly 40% were receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for disabled, low-income individuals at an average of \$573/month, or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) at an average of \$675/month, or Other (unspecified) types of public benefits at an average of \$398/month. Over one-third were privately insured, while another third used public health insurance, and one-quarter were uninsured.

Most were unemployed, living at home, with both public and private financial supports.

Employment	Currently employed (11%)
Where they lived	Private residence (96%), Community homes (3%), Other settings (1%)
Insurance	Private (38%), Public (33%), Uninsured (25%), Both (5%)
Benefits	SSI (29%), SSDI (9%), Other public support (5%)

Social Security Income (SSI)

SSI is a cash benefit provided to people who are both disabled and have a low income level. The Social Security Administration handles SSI benefits.

Fact sheet production: Vijay Murthy, student intern

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The Life Course Outcomes Research Program is building a base of knowledge about the things other than clinical interventions that promote positive outcomes for people on the autism spectrum and their families and communities.