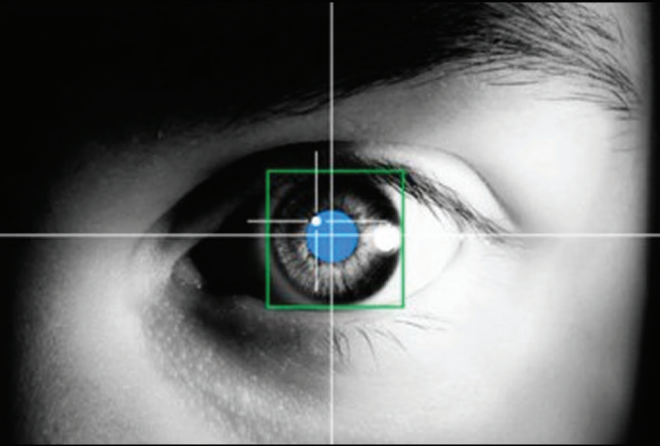# THE FRIST CENTER
FOR Autism AND
INNOVATION

Engineering technologies and transforming the workplace — inspired by neurodiversity.
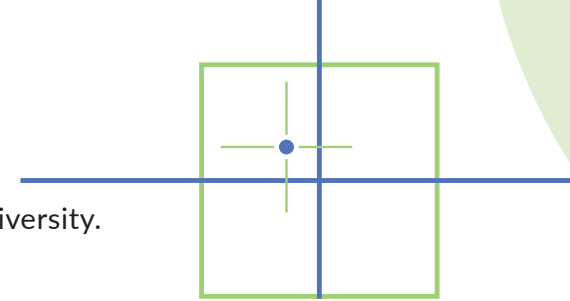
vu.edu/autismandinnovation

THE FRIST CENTER FOR AUTISM AND INNOVATION

at Vanderbilt University School of Engineering

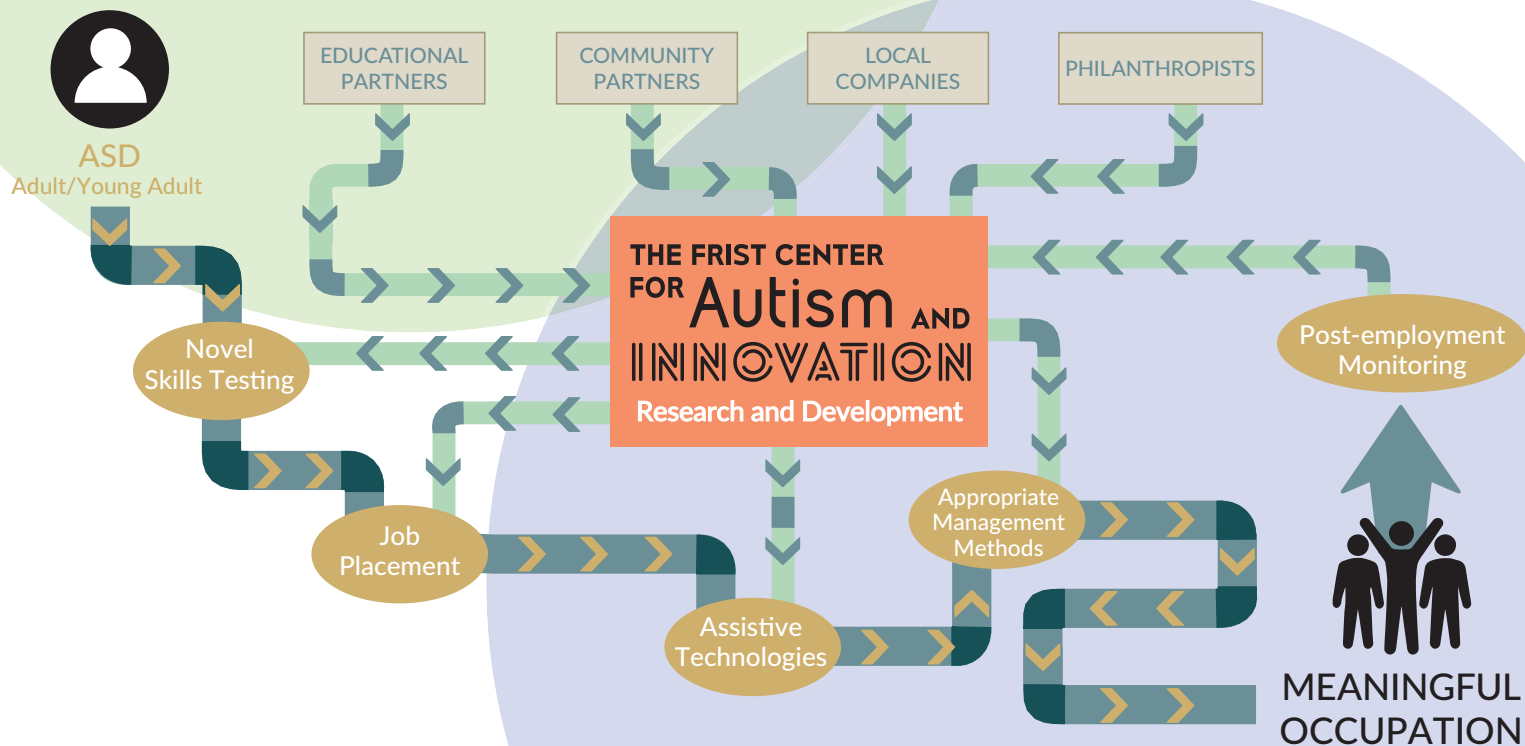Engineering technologies and transforming the workplace — inspired by neurodiversity.

THE CENTER IS DEVOTED TO

- inventing and commercializing new technologies that enable autistic and other neurodiverse people to gain employment, succeed at work, and achieve their full potential;

- studying and understanding neurodiverse capabilities, and inventing and commercializing algorithms and systems that are inspired by those capabilities;

- developing policies, tools, trainings, and workplace practices that recognize and enlist neurodiverse people and talents in the workforce;

- demonstrating, documenting, and disseminating a community-based approach—including employers, self-advocates, researchers, policy makers, agencies, and organizations—to simultaneously enhance the bottom line for business and the quality of life for autistic individuals.

Creating virtual-reality environments to teach driving and other skills for independence and employment

OUR MISSION

The Frist Center for Autism and Innovation at Vanderbilt University School of Engineering brings engineers, business scholars, and disabilities researchers together with experts in neuroscience and education to understand, maximize, and promote neurodiverse talent. From a strengths-based—as opposed to deficit-based—understanding of autism and neurodiversity, the center sees opportunities for innovation in technology and in workplace practices. Distinctive in focus, the Frist Center develops and commercializes devices, algorithms, and systems both in support of and inspired by neurodiverse abilities. By studying and modeling employment arrangements, the center supports inclusive organizational cultures in which neurodiverse individuals can manifest their full potential. With engagement across academia, government, business, and nonprofit organizations, as well as the clinical, vocational, and self-advocacy domains, the center works to build a true community-based approach that improves lives, organizations, and society.

ASD
Adult/Young Adult

EDUCATIONAL PARTNERS

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

LOCAL COMPANIES

PHILANTHROPISTS

THE FRIST CENTER FOR Autism AND INNOVATION
Research and Development

Novel Skills Testing

Job Placement

Assistive Technologies

Appropriate Management Methods

Post-employment Monitoring

MEANINGFUL OCCUPATION

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT MODEL

The Frist Center uses as its guiding framework a conceptual model through which we envision an orchestrated, community-based effort that enables autistic individuals to achieve meaningful employment. This conceptual model includes multiple academic and community stakeholders, linking together multiple research and development efforts, and a commitment to both academic rigor and compassionate human impact. To be sure, this is a vision that will require a sustained effort over many years on the part of many individuals and organizations working together. The Frist Center seeks to provide a stable platform of support to enable such a sustained effort toward realization of this vision.

WRaP
Workforce Readiness and Preparation

Workforce Readiness and Preparation (WRaP)

WRaP is a monthlong training experience for young adults to learn about their own strengths and interests related to careers. Participants also learn practical aspects of how to work as part of a team, how to communicate with co-workers, and how to advocate for their needs. A free, online, self-paced curriculum and guide are available for teachers and others to learn how to deliver the WRaP program.

College Autism Network
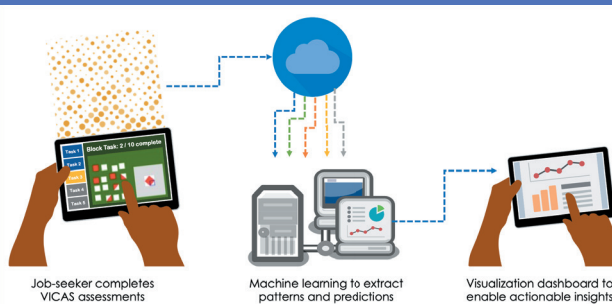ADVOCACY | RESEARCH | TRAINING

College Autism Network (CAN)

CAN represents nearly 100 colleges and universities with programs to support students from transition into college, to degree completion, to transition into the workforce. An annual summit brings together hundreds of practitioners, scholars, employers, and self-advocates. A free online database helps prospective students and families find institutions matched to their goals and support needs.
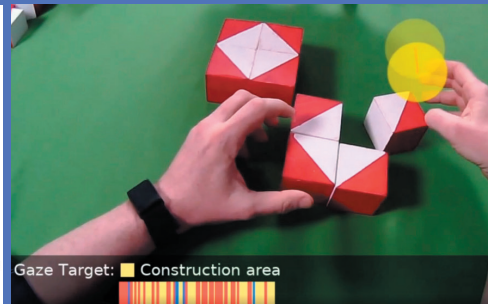
AUTISM CAREER EMPOWERMENT

Autism Career Empowerment (ACE)

ACE is a free, comprehensive set of online training modules for campus-based professionals who support autistic students to prepare for and find employment. Whether you work in a career services office, a disability resource center, or an autism-specific campus program, you will find the ACE curriculum to be helpful in your own efforts to support your students.
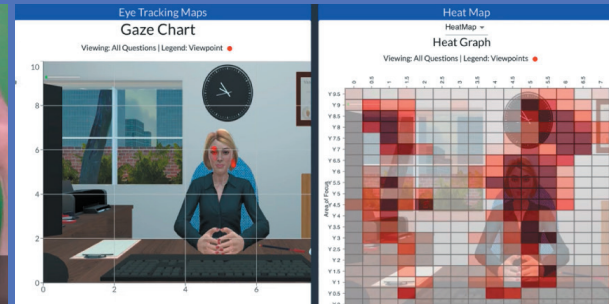
Job-seeker completes VICAS assessments · Machine learning to extract patterns and predictions · Visualization dashboard to enable actionable insights

Block Task: 2 / 10 complete

Gaze Target: Construction area

Eye Tracking Maps
Gaze Chart
Viewing: All Questions | Legend: Viewpoint

Heat Map
HeatMap
Heat Graph
Viewing: All Questions | Legend: Viewpoints

Visual systems for job-matching based on abilities *Using eye-movement patterns to assess problem-solving skills* *Virtual-reality environments for job-interview practice and coaching*

VANDERBILT
SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING | Frist Center for Autism and Innovation

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