Outcomes Model and Core Services

**Mission:** To improve the lives of all affected by autism.

**Vision:** The Autism Society envisions individuals and families living with autism are able to maximize their quality of life, are treated with the highest level of dignity, and live in a society in which their talents and skills are appreciated and valued.

**National Outcomes Model**
The Autism Society vision identifies three keys to improving the lives of those affected by autism:
1. Maximize Quality of Life
2. Treated With Dignity
3. Talents Are Valued

All efforts by the Autism Society focus on these three keys to mission fulfillment. Through our strategic planning efforts, the Autism Society identified 15 outcomes that best indicate improvement to the lives of those affected by autism. Each of the 15 outcomes supports one of the three keys: maximizing quality of life, being treated with dignity, and having talents valued.

This new outcomes-based model addresses basic human rights that allow people to interact with one another and the world on their own terms. Quality of life indicators such as the ability to communicate, the freedom to choose a career and opportunities for community involvement are essential aspects of the human experience, and we promote treatments, accommodations and acceptance with them in mind.

Through this new model, the Autism Society is able to provide consistency in outcomes and experiences nationwide, while maintaining autonomy among the Autism Society Affiliates to best serve their local communities through local programs.

**The 15 Outcomes**

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Outcomes Defined

Academic Success
People with autism should have the opportunity to participate in school to their fullest capability and learn in an environment and manner that enables them to succeed

Autonomy and Self-Sufficiency
People with autism have the right to make their own decisions

Communication
People with autism should be able to express themselves and interact with others in a meaningful way

Financial Stability
People with autism should be able to afford the things and services they need

Health and Well-Being
People with autism should feel and be well physically and have access to the services they need to stay healthy

Inclusion
People with autism should be welcomed to participate actively in their schools, workplaces and communities

Independent Living
People with autism have the right to lead their own lives, and they should also have support if they need help caring for themselves

Meaningful Employment with Fair Wages
People with autism should have the opportunity to do work that contributes to their communities, and should receive compensation befitting their positions

Pursuit of Dreams
People with autism should feel empowered to achieve their aspirations!

Recreation and Leisure
People with autism should be able to pursue their interests and spend their free time in a meaningful way

Respect and Dignity
People with autism should feel respected by those around them

Safety
People with autism should feel secure and be able to get help from their communities, law enforcement and others as needed

Self-Identity and Acceptance
People with autism should understand and appreciate themselves, and feel understood and valued by others

Social Connections
People with autism should have friends and supporters as well as ties to their communities

Subjective Well-Being
People with autism should feel happy and enjoy life
Core Services of the Autism Society
The Autism Society is a national source of information, advocacy and support that reaches local communities with a one-of-a-kind nationwide network of autism knowledge and support. Since 1965, the Autism Society has been the leader in serving people with ASD, their families and professionals. We continue to be passionately committed to changing autism today and in the future through our five core services:

- **Advocacy**
  The Autism Society’s public policy and advocacy efforts have continually improved the lives of those affected by autism. At the national level, the Autism Society supports the needs of the millions of individuals impacted by autism in America and their family members. At the state level, the Autism Society helps state Autism Societies advancing advocacy efforts at the state level to advance the wellbeing of individuals and families impacted by autism. Each year, volunteers and staff from around the nation come to Washington, DC to meet with their national elected officials and to promote a responsive and accountable national legislative agenda to advance the quality of life of all diagnosed with autism.

- **Education**
  The Autism Society provides easy-to-understand, practical information related to the autism spectrum for a broad audience on a wide range of educational topics to empower people to more effectively advocate and obtain supports. We work to educate individuals with autism, their loved ones, professionals from multiple disciplines, and the public at large about autism and issues within the autism community in order to foster acceptance and appreciation of individuals on the autism spectrum as the valued members of our community that they are.

- **Information & Referral**
  Many parents say that their first call after receiving a diagnosis of autism is to the Autism Society, however it doesn’t end with that first call. We are here through all phases of one’s lifespan, empowering those affected by autism through a one-on-one connection with our staff of trained Information and Referral specialists.

- **Support**
  Autism Society’s affiliates are your best source of information and support, and where the person in need is helped directly. Through support groups, help with understanding the services in the community or state, local and state advocacy, help to an individual and his/her family to navigate often complex and confusing service systems, and training to local and statewide organizations on being autism friendly and responsive, the local or state Autism Society affiliates thrive each and every day.

- **Community**
  The Autism Society’s vision is to increase the quality of life of everyone living with ASD by building autism friendly, inclusive communities. The Autism Society believes that individuals with autism deserve to live, work, play, socialize, learn and worship in the setting and manner of their own choosing.

Core Services and Outcomes
The strength of the Autism Society lies in the local knowledge and presence of our network of Affiliates. While programs and services are tailored to best serve the local communities, all Autism Society activity across the country provides one of our five Core Services and advances at least one of the Quality of Life Outcomes.
**Lifespan Planning Defined**

Lifespan Planning is an ongoing cradle to grave process where an individual’s needs are anticipated and proactively planned for. Lifespan planning is a vital element in impacting positive outcomes for families and individuals living with autism. Lifespan Planning includes assistance, guidance and programs which evolve over a person's lifetime, to improve their own quality of life in a manner that is meaningful to both the individuals and their families.

**Life Stages**

Like everyone else, people with autism move through significant life changes. Their quality of life depends not only on the foundation provided in childhood, but also on ongoing supports that are specific to their educational, medical, social, recreational, family and employment needs. The Autism Society supports people with autism and their families through five critical stages of life:

- **Birth to 5**
  Early identification of an ASD is crucial, as it means early intervention services can begin, making a huge impact on a child’s behavior, functioning and future well-being.

- **School Age**
  The school years bring innumerable challenges for a child with autism, but they also hold incredible opportunity for growth. For parents, the challenge is to discover and leverage resources to maximize the child’s avenues of academic learning, social experience and physical fitness. Having a team of professionals is essential throughout this long life stage – getting help from those who know the system can reduce stress on the family and improve outcomes for the child with autism.

- **Transition to Adulthood**
  The transition from federally mandated services provided through the school system to adult services can be a challenge. The first step in transition planning is to take a look at the individual’s interests, abilities and needs.

- **Adulthood**
  The Autism Society works to ensure that every adult with autism has access to services and supports that maximize independence and secure the highest quality of life.

- **Older Adult**
  Transition into older adulthood brings unique challenges in healthcare, housing, social supports, and financial management. Autism research and support services have historically focused largely on children, but as more adults with an autism diagnosis transition into this life stage, communities are beginning to look more closely at how to best provide ongoing support for older adults on the spectrum.

**The Autism Society’s Lifespan Planning Initiative**

The Autism Society is the organization that is best positioned to provide assistance, guidance, advice, and direction to stakeholders across their lifespan. We are currently working to build a lifespan planning model that is sustainable, accessible and scalable, and that leverages community partnerships, so all individuals and families living with autism are able to maximize their quality of life, are treated with the highest level of dignity, and live in a society in which their talents and skills are appreciated and valued.

![Autism Society Logo]

*Improving the Lives of All Affected by Autism*