

Steps to Adulthood. Psychological and Educational Support for Adolescents and Young Adults with ASD



Dear Readers,

You are holding an issue of the journal "Autism and Developmental Disorders" (Russia) dedicated to the important topic of the maturation of adolescents and young adults with autism, scientific research, and technologies for psychological and educational support.

Growing up is an anticipated and quite complex stage in anyone's life. When we speak of reaching adulthood, we mean not only biological age but also certain social achievements: increasing independence and self-sufficiency, expanding opportunities for participation in societal life, mastering different social roles, and establishing new social connections. For individuals with autism, many of these understandable and expected steps require significantly more effort than for neurotypical individuals, and they involve the use of special technologies that help them advance toward adulthood.

This issue includes articles that highlight the problem of socialization of adolescents and young adults with varying levels of functioning: from those who independently and quite successfully participate in social life, to adolescents and adults who need constant support to gradually enhance their social and communicative competencies and develop independence. You will read about research findings that reveal the specifics of social-communicative interaction and the development of independence in individuals with ASD, as well as descriptions of technologies and working methods used in modern practice.

This issue is yet another step toward developing a support system for people with autism, a step toward continuing research, and the development and testing of technologies to assist adolescents and adults with ASD.

Sincerely, Olga Karanevskaya