

“Our relationship has matured”: Improving parental relationships through specialist peer mentoring for autistic university students

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Background

Many parents of autistic individuals continue to support their children well into adulthood.

Transitioning to adult roles, such as that of a university student, can be challenging for both autistic young adults and their parents.

Specialist peer mentoring (SPM) has been proposed as one approach, which may be effective in mitigating these challenges.

Project aim

To explore the experiences and perceptions of parents of autistic young adults who participated in a SPM designed to support the transition to university.

Methods

13 semi-structured interviews (11 mothers) were completed.

Parents discussed the experiences of 12 specialist peer mentored autistic university students (average age=21.2; SD=1.94; 2 female).

The interviews were transcribed and analysed in three stages; identification of meaning units, thematic analysis and directed content analysis, linking to ICF core set for ASD. (Bölte et al., 2018).

Results

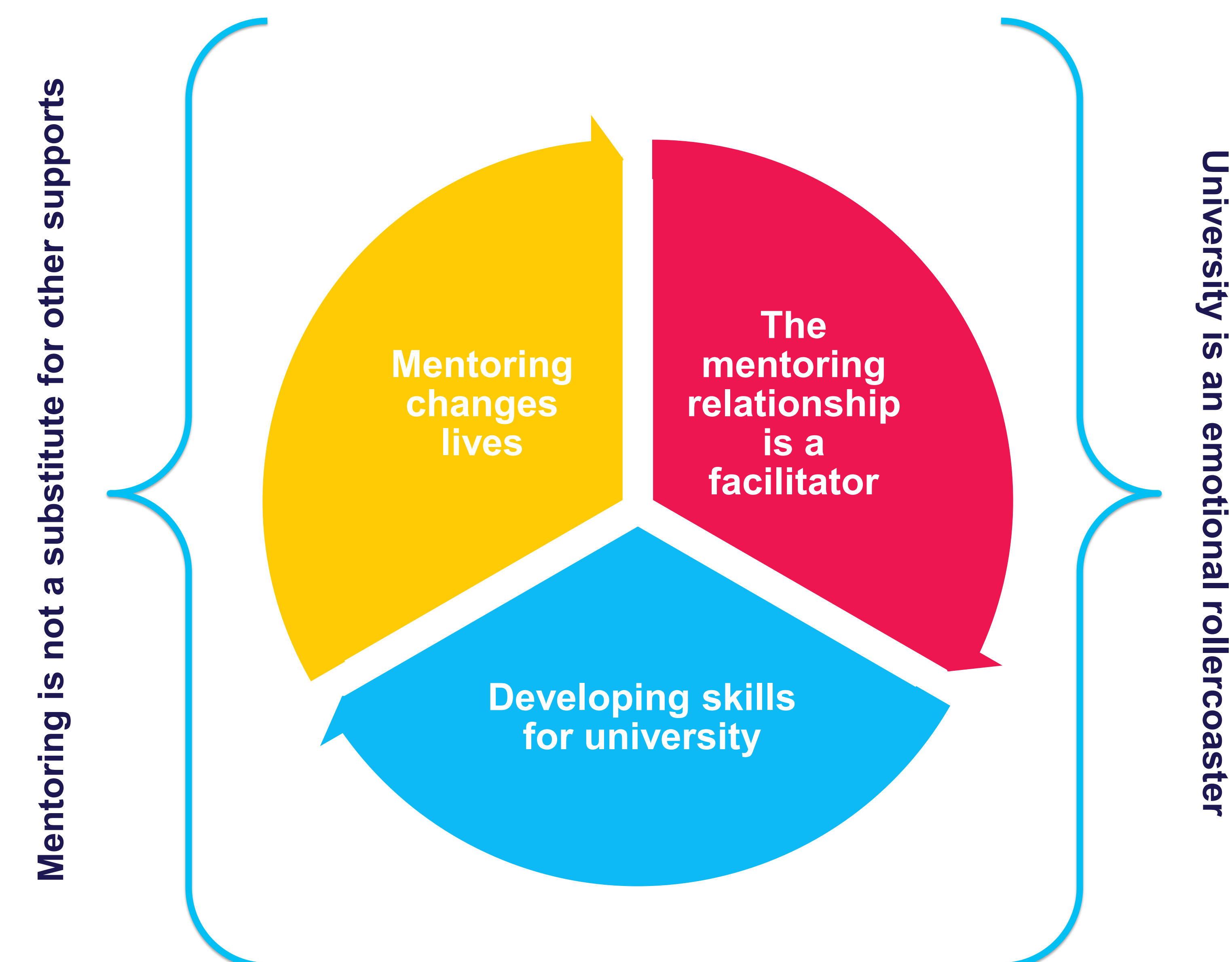
The 13 interviews resulted in

- 284 meaningful units that were linked to the second-level frequencies of the ICF core set for ASD (Bölte et al., 2018) and the personal factors of the ICF (Grotkamp, Cibis, Nüchtern, von Mittelstaedt, & Seger, 2012):
 - Body Functions (18%);
 - Activity and Participation (43%);
 - Environment (31%); and,
 - Personal Factors (6%)
 - 2% not coded.



References

- Bölte, S., Mahdi, S., de Vries, P. J., Granlund, M., Robison, J. E., Shulman, C., . . . Selb, M. (2018). The Gestalt of functioning in autism spectrum disorder: Results of the international conference to develop final consensus International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health core sets. *Autism*. doi:10.1177/1362361318755522
- Grotkamp, S. L., Cibis, W. M., Nüchtern, E. A. M., von Mittelstaedt, G., & Seger, W. K. F. (2012). Personal Factors in the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health: Prospective Evidence. *The Australian Journal of Rehabilitation Counselling*, 18(1), 1-24. doi:10.1017/jrc.2012.4



Conclusion

Parents attributed their improving relationship with their autistic young adult to SPM.

Linking to the ICF core set for ASD revealed that from the parents' perspective the SPM program worked to target 'the fit' between participation in university and the environment for autistic young adults.

For more information

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