



AUTISM / ASPERGERS RESEARCH PROGRAM

VOCATIONAL SURVEY OF ADULTS WITH ASD IN ARIZONA

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BACKGROUND

In summer 2015 Governor Ducey created an ASD Task Force on AHCCCS services

Sub-committee on Adult Services includes Prof. Adams, who developed vocational survey

Survey completed by 172 ASD families in fall 2015

Results shared with DDD, RSA, and submitted to Governor

GOALS

- **Determine vocational status of adults with ASD**
- **Determine barriers to employment**
- **Develop recommendations on how to improve employment services**

Demographic of Participants

Response Type

Parent/Guardian of an adult with ASD	73%
Adults with ASD	25%
Adult with ASD and their Parents/Guardian	2%

Participant Age

18-24	56%
25-44	31%
45+	13%

Highest Level of Education

Still in high school	9%
Dropped out of high school	1%
Completed high school	41%
Currently in vocational program	6%
Completed vocational program	2%
Currently a college student	12%
Completed several college courses	11%
Completed Associate's degree	5%
Completed Bachelor's degree	8%
Completed graduate degree	6%

JOB STATISTICS

Current Job Situation

Student in high school	9%
Student in vocational program	3%
Student in college	4%
Center-based employment	4%
Group-based employment	5%
Regular employment with supports	9%
Regular employment without support	28%
Self-employed	1%
Unemployed, looking for work	27%
Unemployed, not looking for work, not a student	13%

Job Types

Entry Level Job	82%
Professional Level Job	18%

Typical Hourly Wage

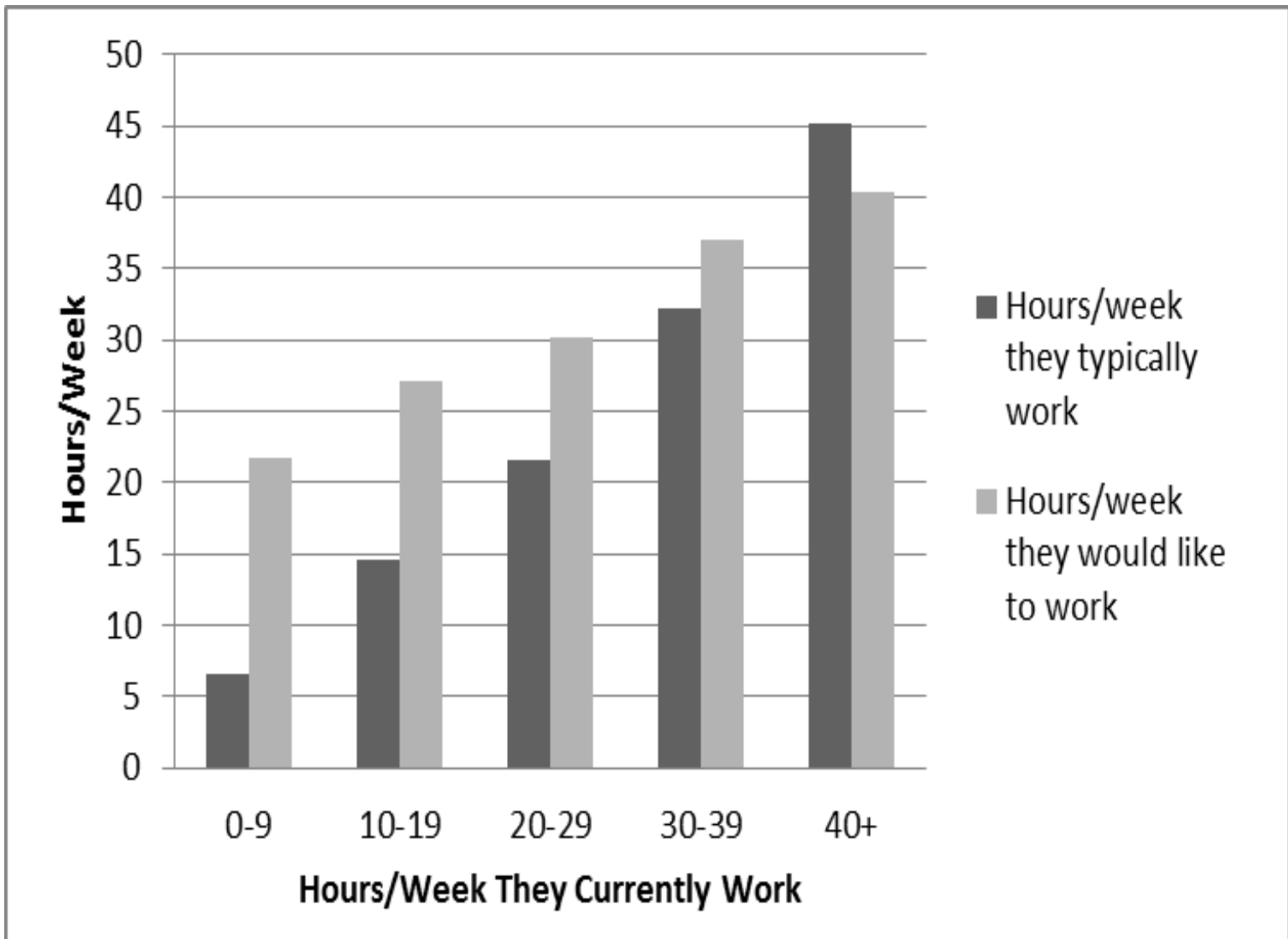
Average Hourly Wage	\$12.50/hour
Median Hourly Wage	\$9/hour
Percent under \$8/hour	19%

Hourly Wage Based on Type of Employment

Center-based employment	\$3/ hour
Group-based employment	\$3/ hour
Regular employment with supports	\$9/ hour
Regular employment without supports	\$16/ hour

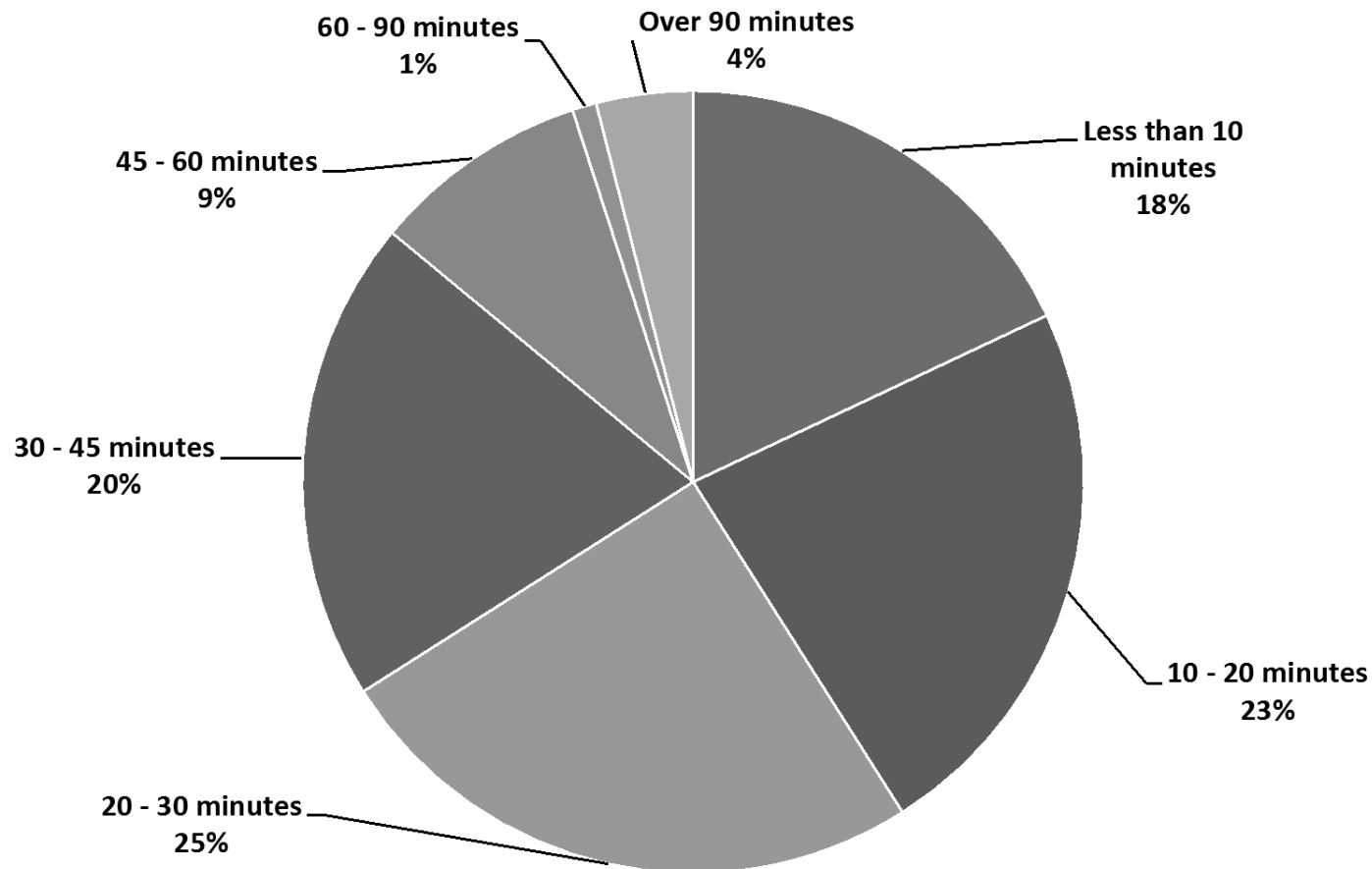
Average Hours per Week

Typically worked	25 hours/week
Would like to work	33 hours/week

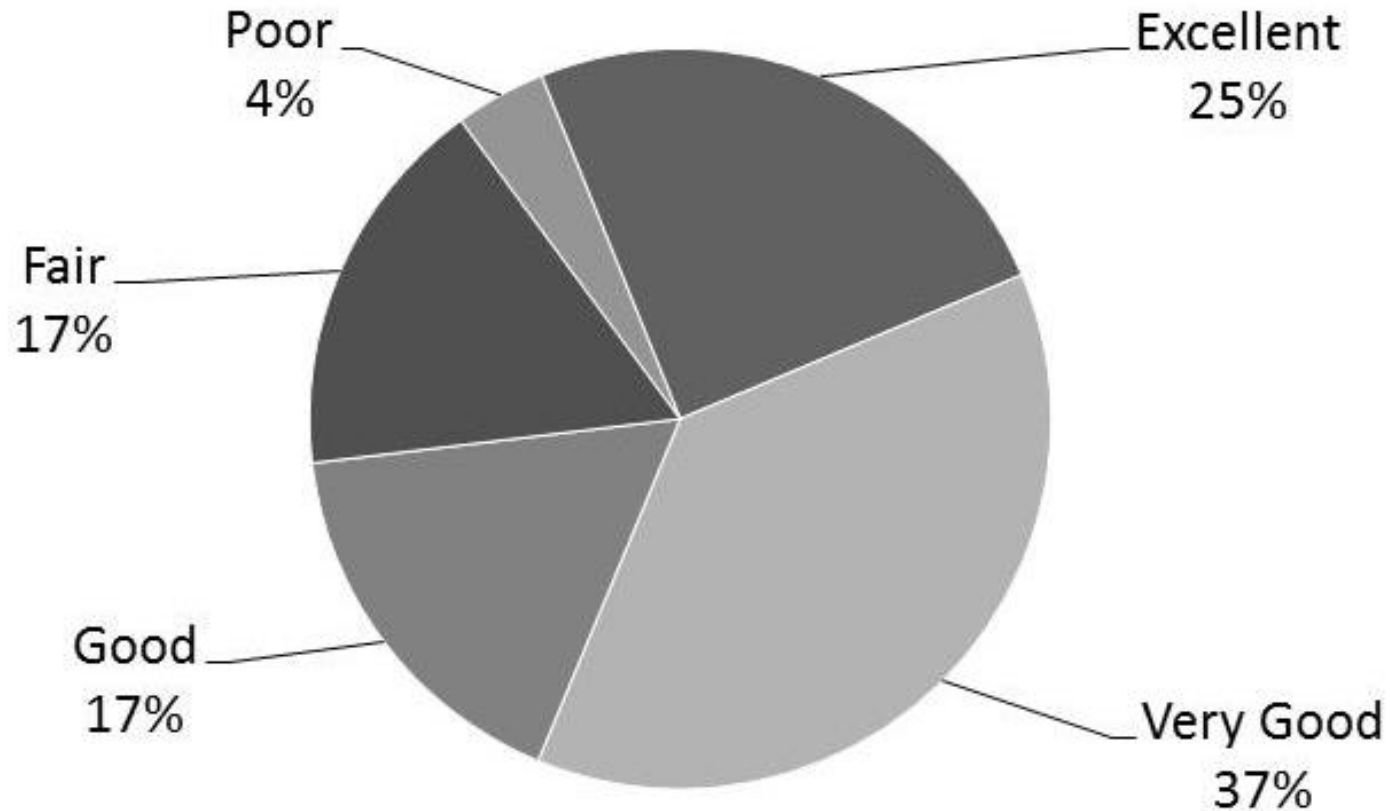


Those working few hours would like to work more, those at 40+ hours would like to work less

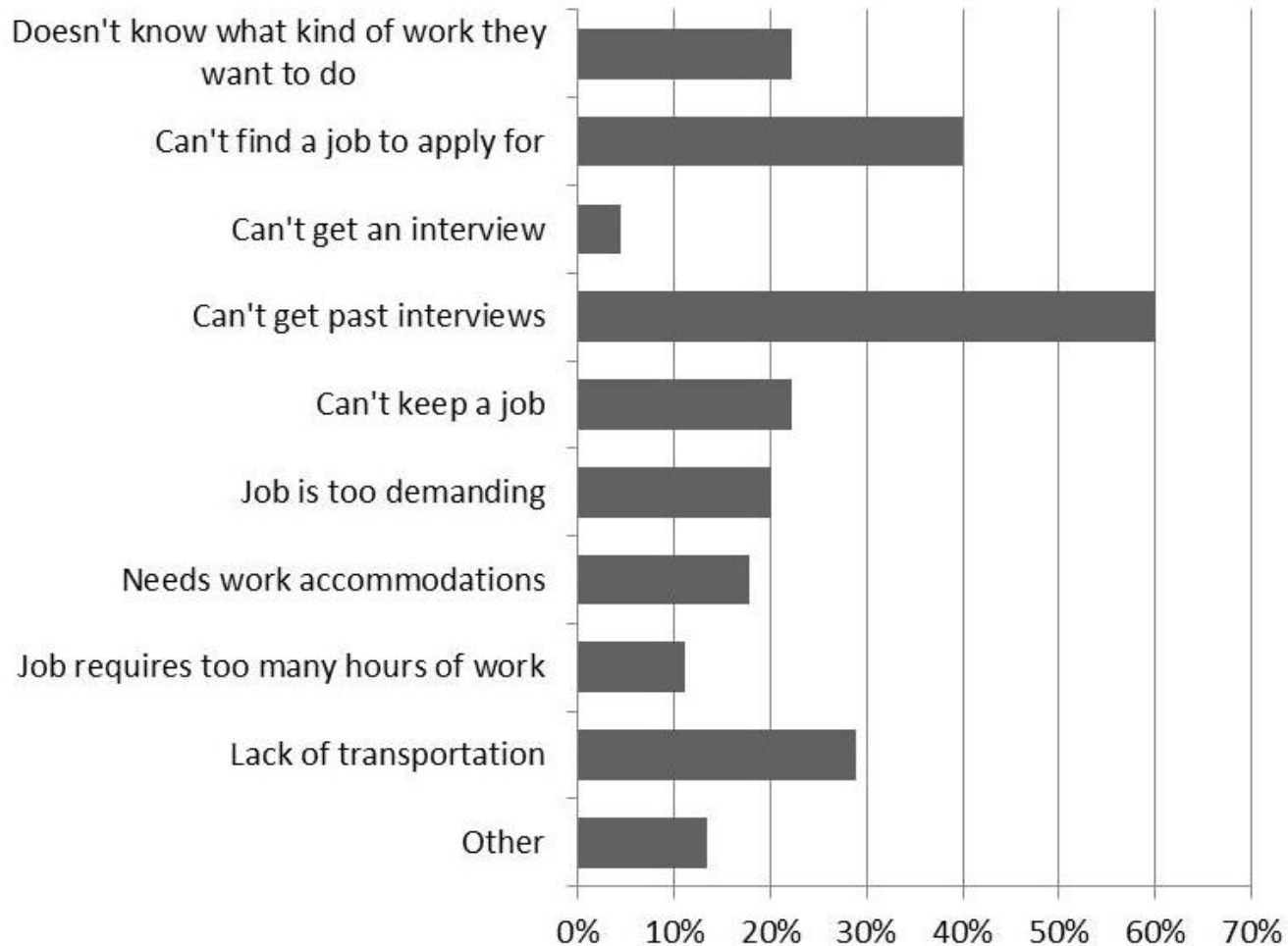
TIME SPENT COMMUTING TO WORK (ONE WAY)



JOB SATISFACTION



BARRIERS TO FINDING EMPLOYMENT



Respondents were able to select more than one option and percentages are out of number of respondents who answered the question

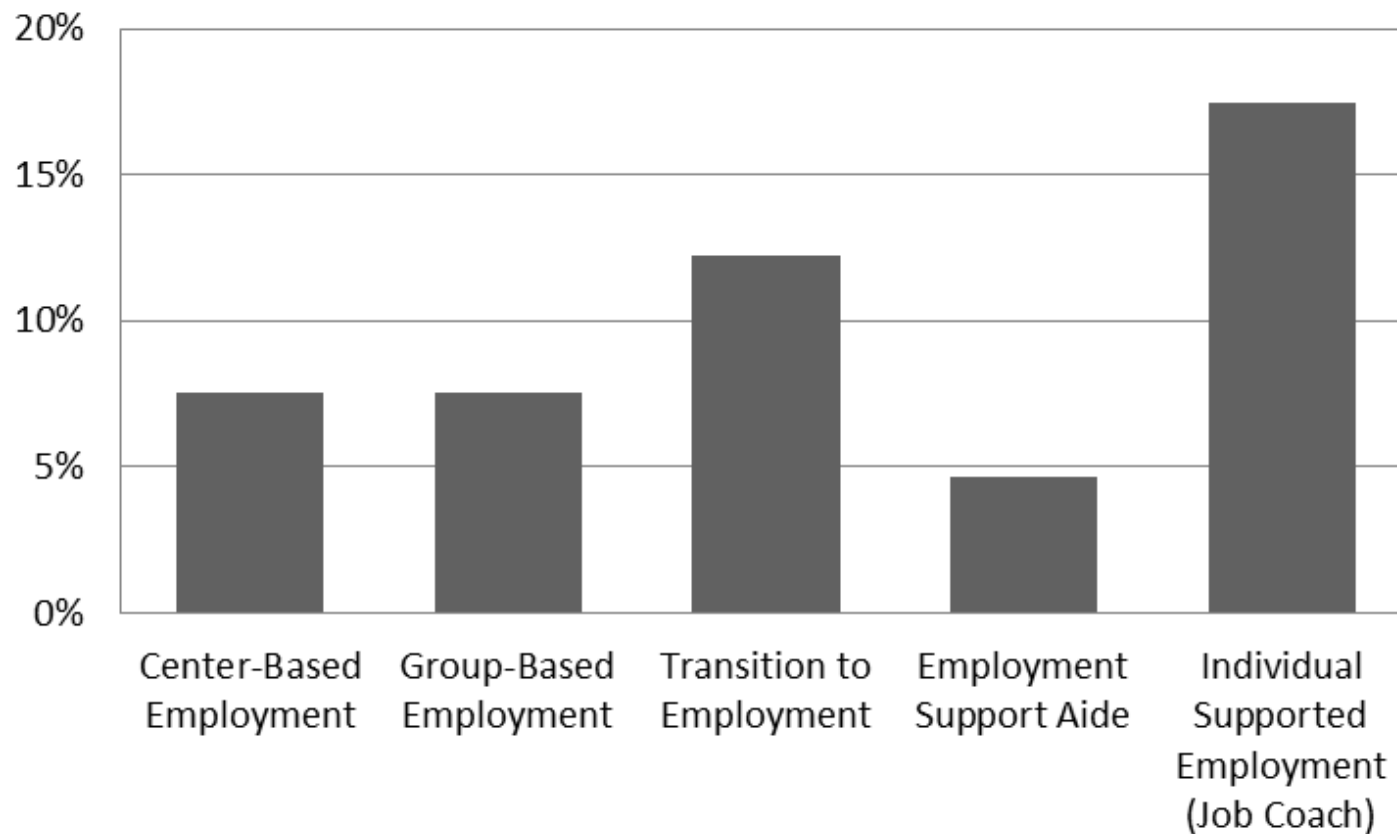
Challenges to Finding/Keeping a Job

Autism Symptoms Inhibiting Job Acquisition	30%
Need Job Coaching/ Job Training	24%
Problems Getting or Getting Past Interviews	17%
Lack of support from DDD/VR agencies	11%
Employer's lack of understanding of ASD	9%

What Help is Most Needed to Find/Keep a Job

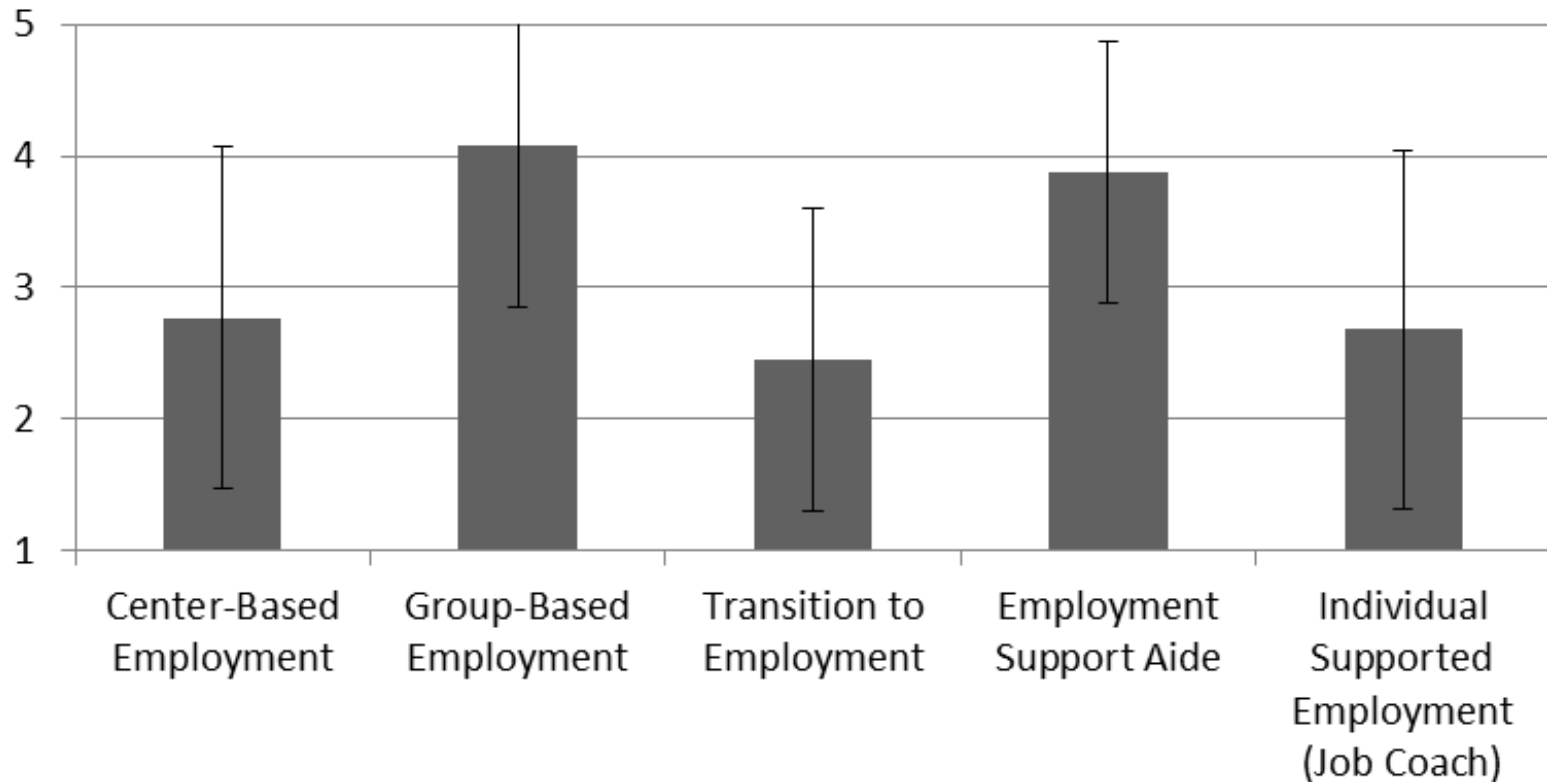
Job Coaching/ Job Training	43%
Teaching employers about how to work with individuals with ASD	24%
Teaching Interview Skills/ Application Skills	22%
Transportation	9%

PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS THAT USED DDD SERVICES



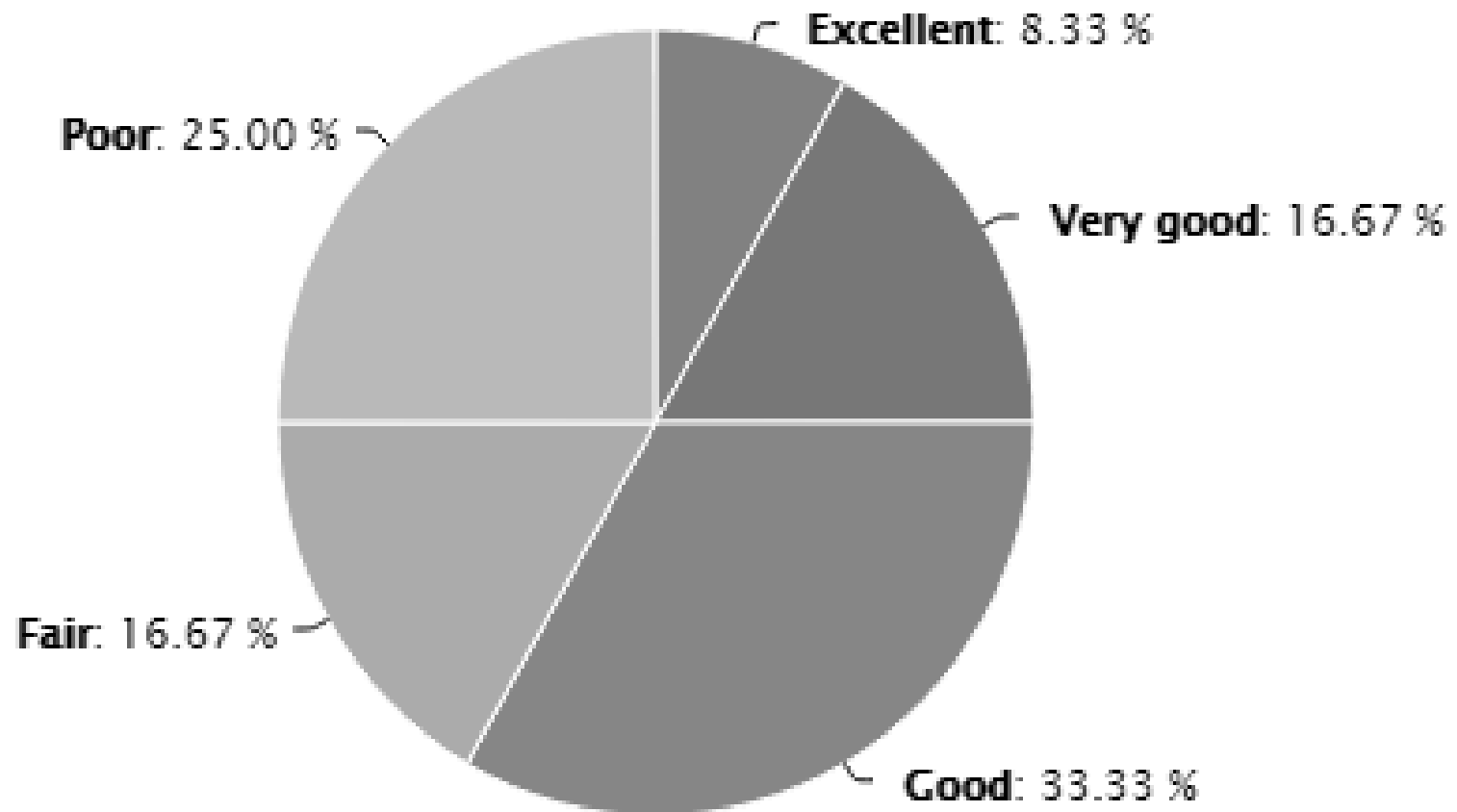
67% of respondents did not use any DDD services

SATISFACTION WITH DDD SERVICES ON A SCALE OF 1 (POOR) TO 5 (EXCELLENT)

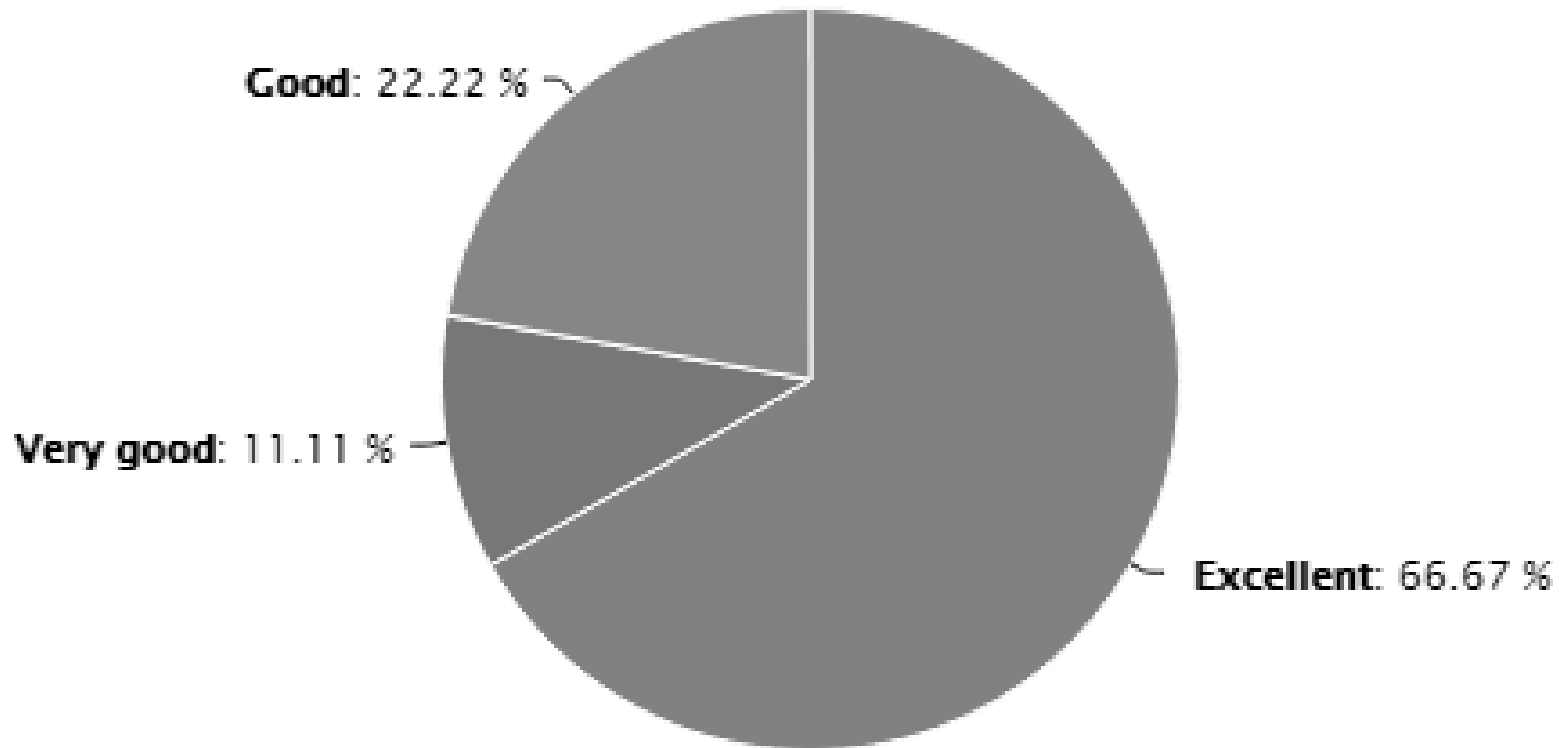


Data points represent averages and standard deviation.

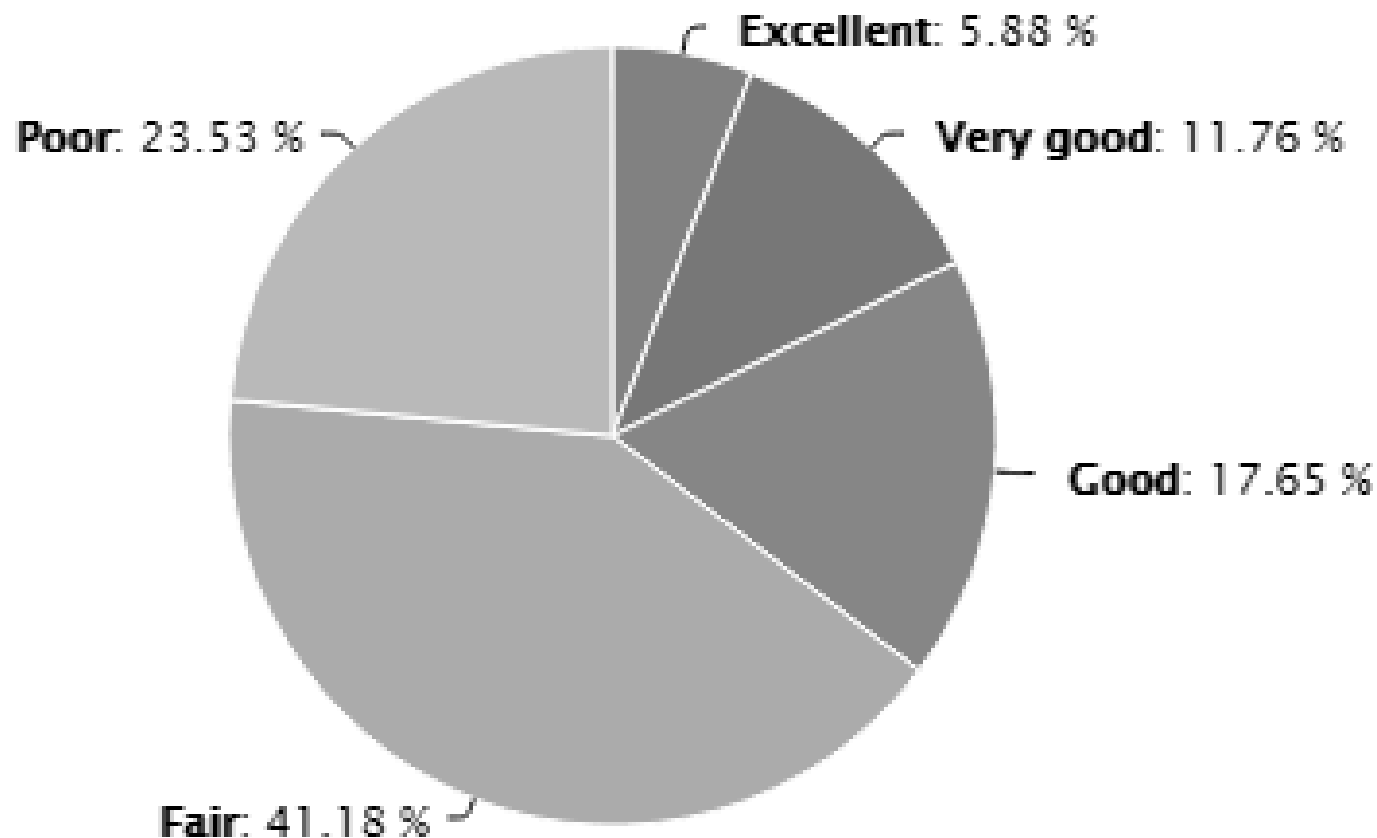
CENTER-BASED EMPLOYMENT



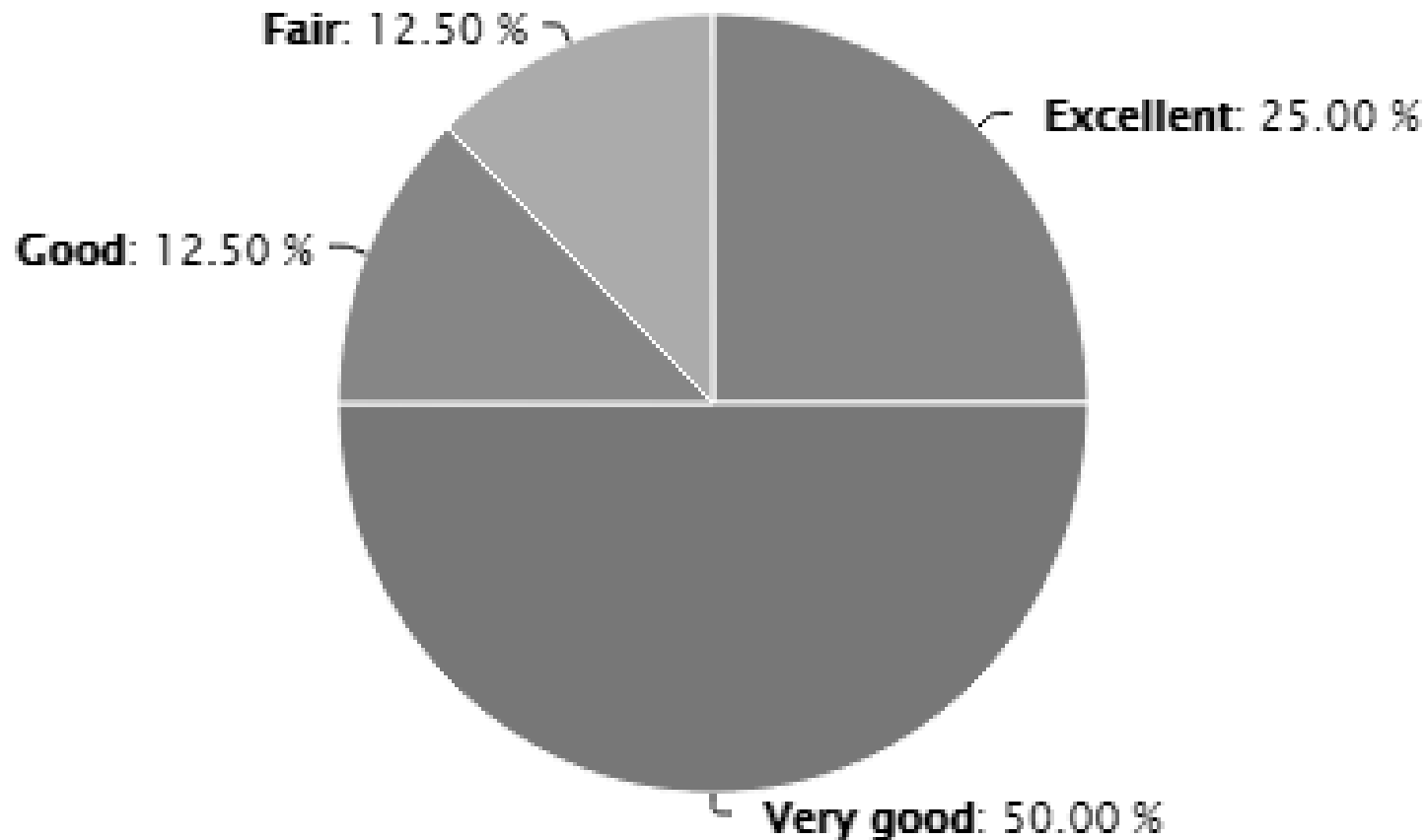
GROUP-BASED EMPLOYMENT



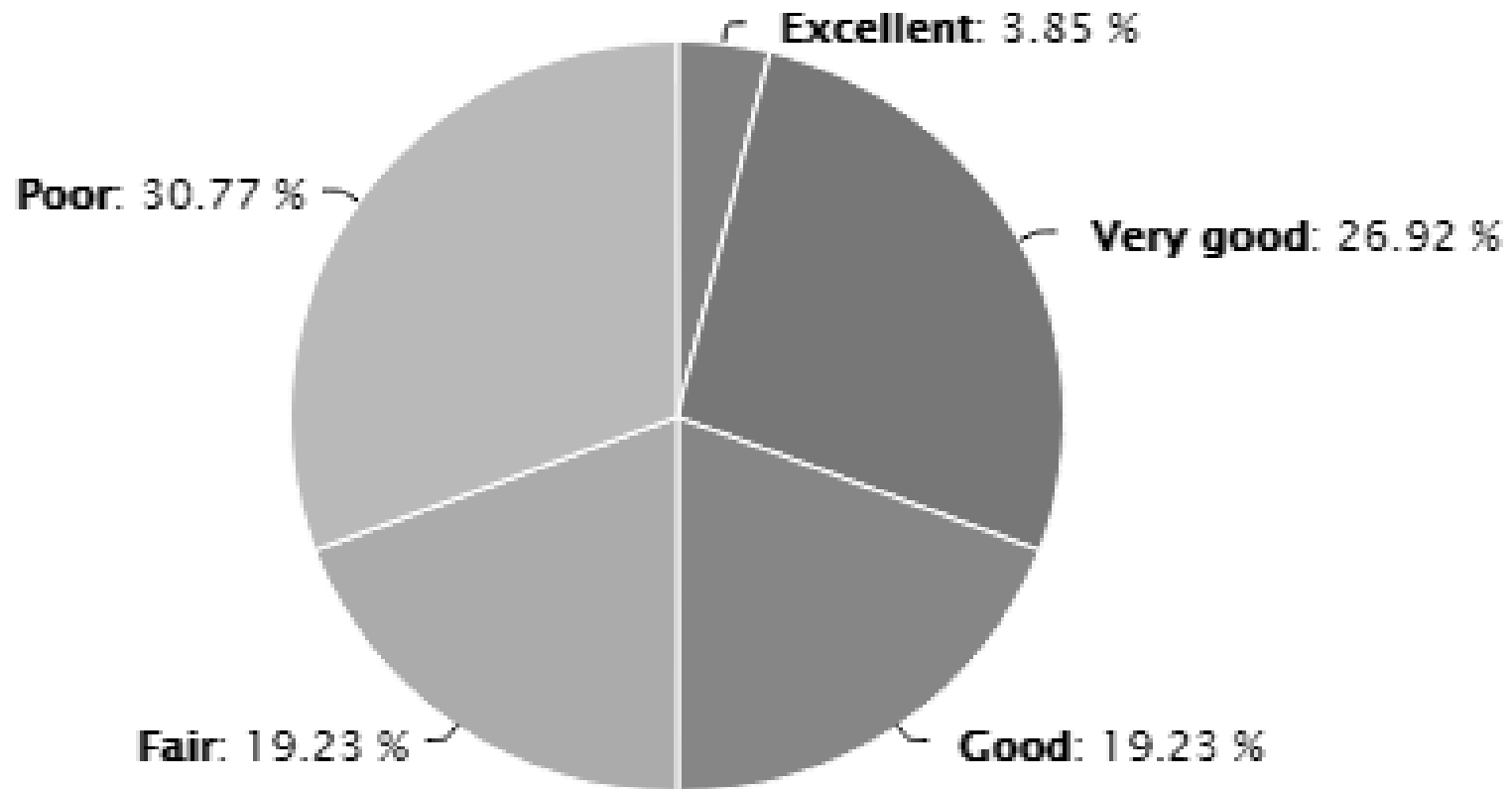
TRANSITION TO EMPLOYMENT



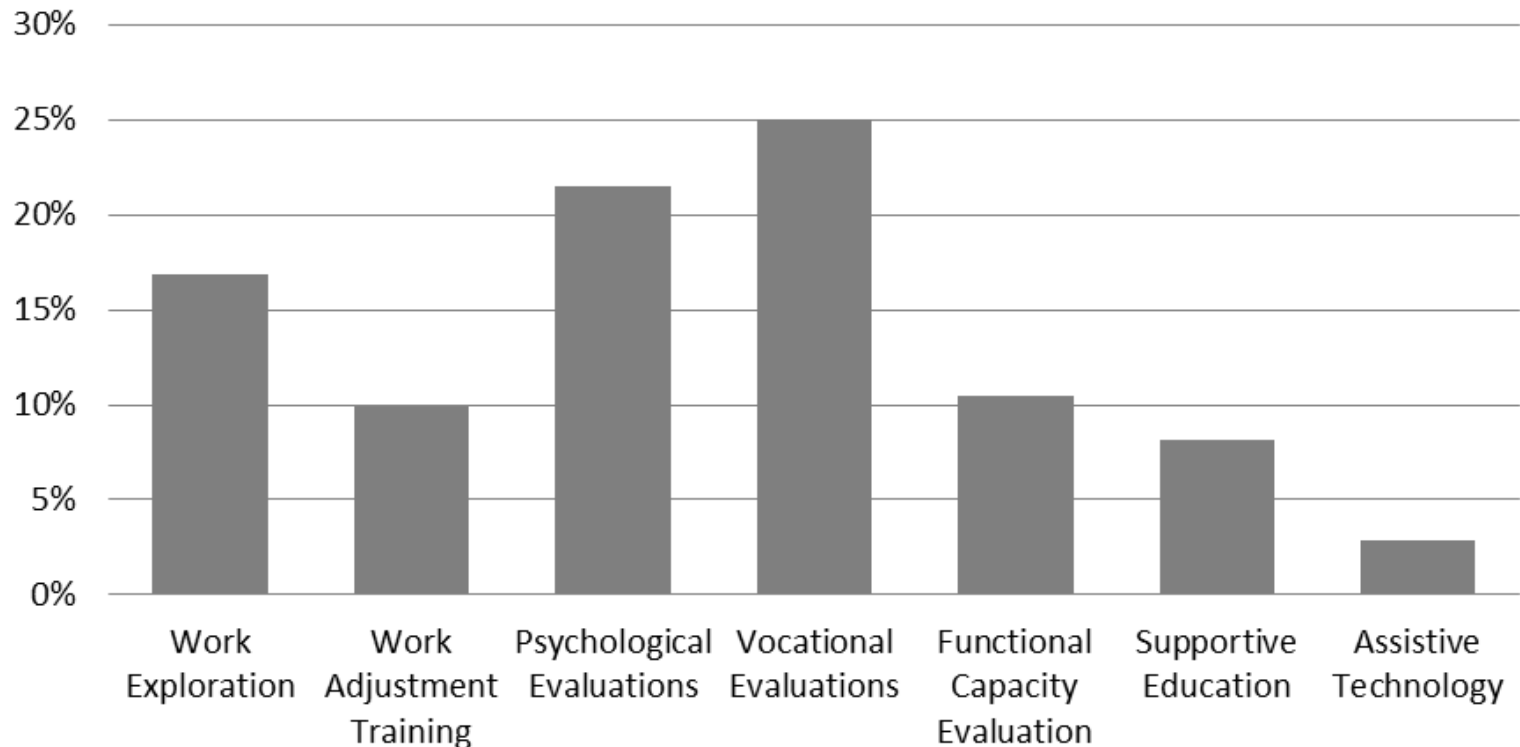
EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT AIDE



INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

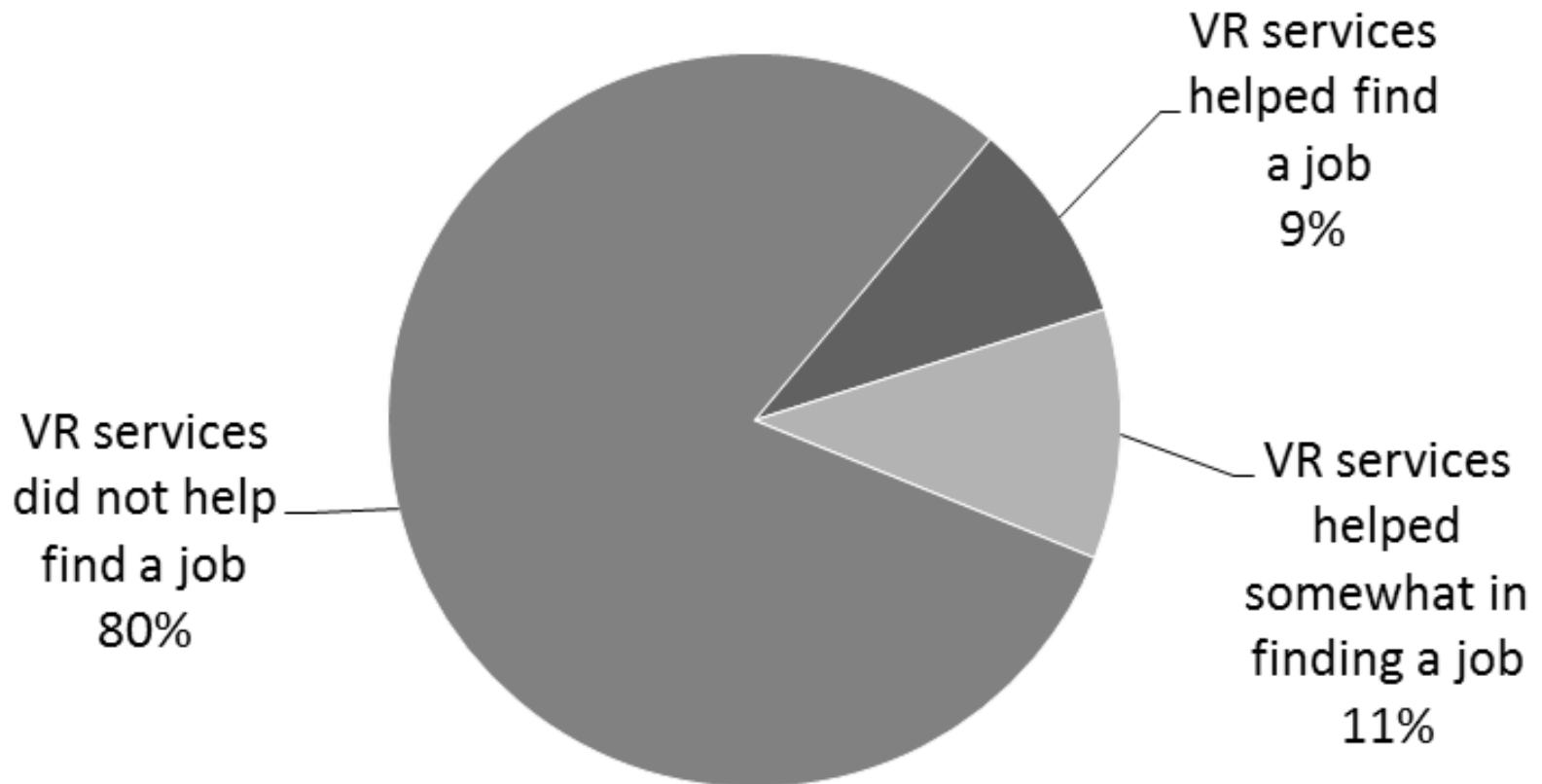


PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS THAT USED DIFFERENT VR SERVICES

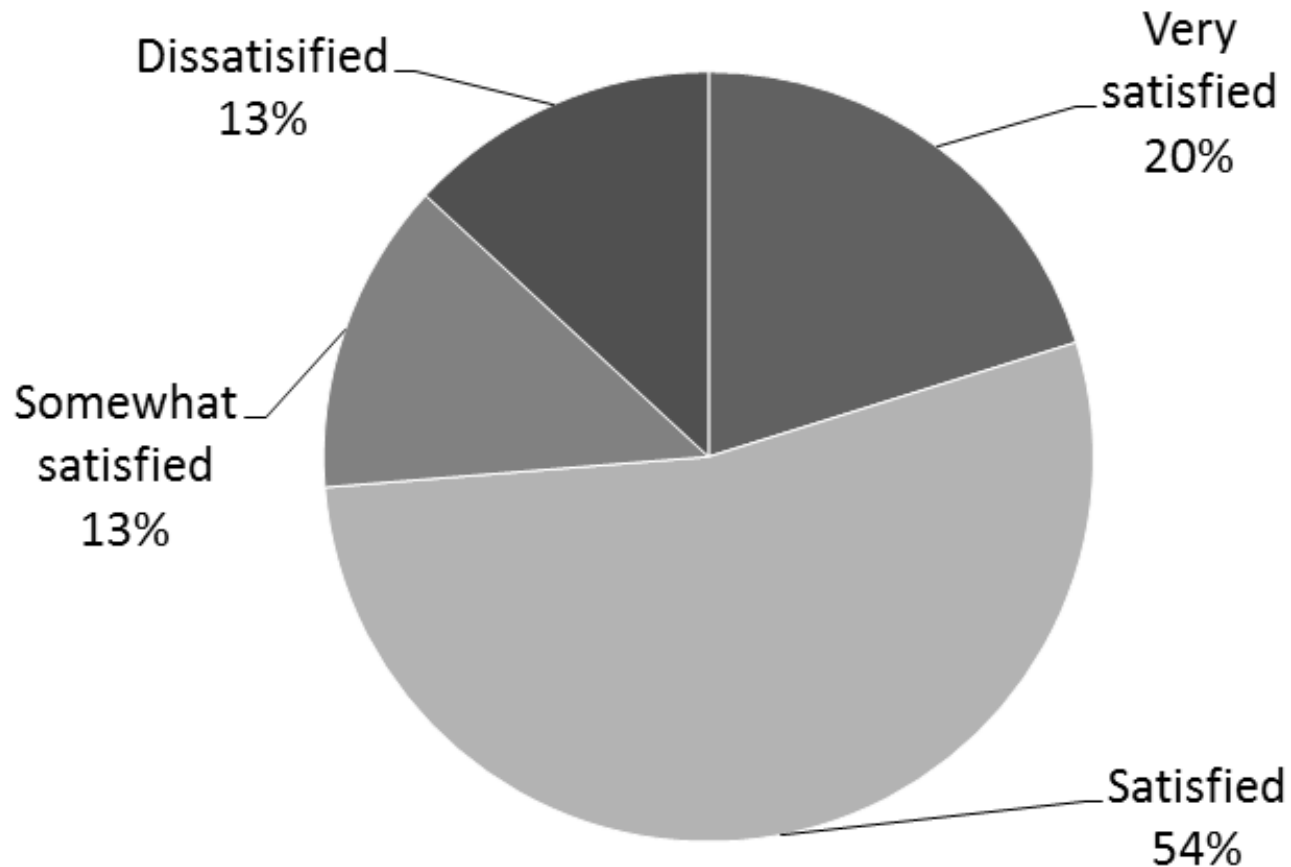


47% of respondents did not use any VR services

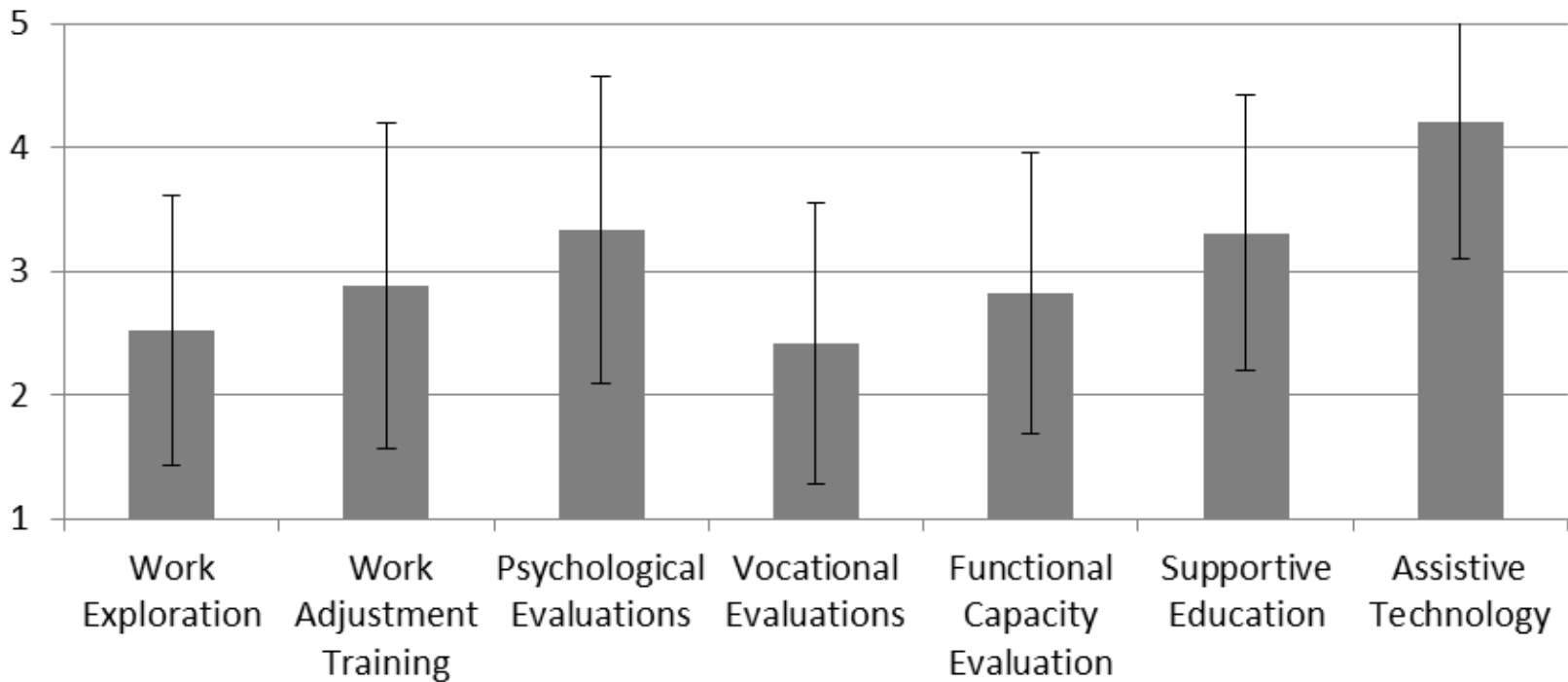
VR'S HELP IN FINDING A JOB



SATISFACTION OF JOB FOUND WITH VR'S HELP

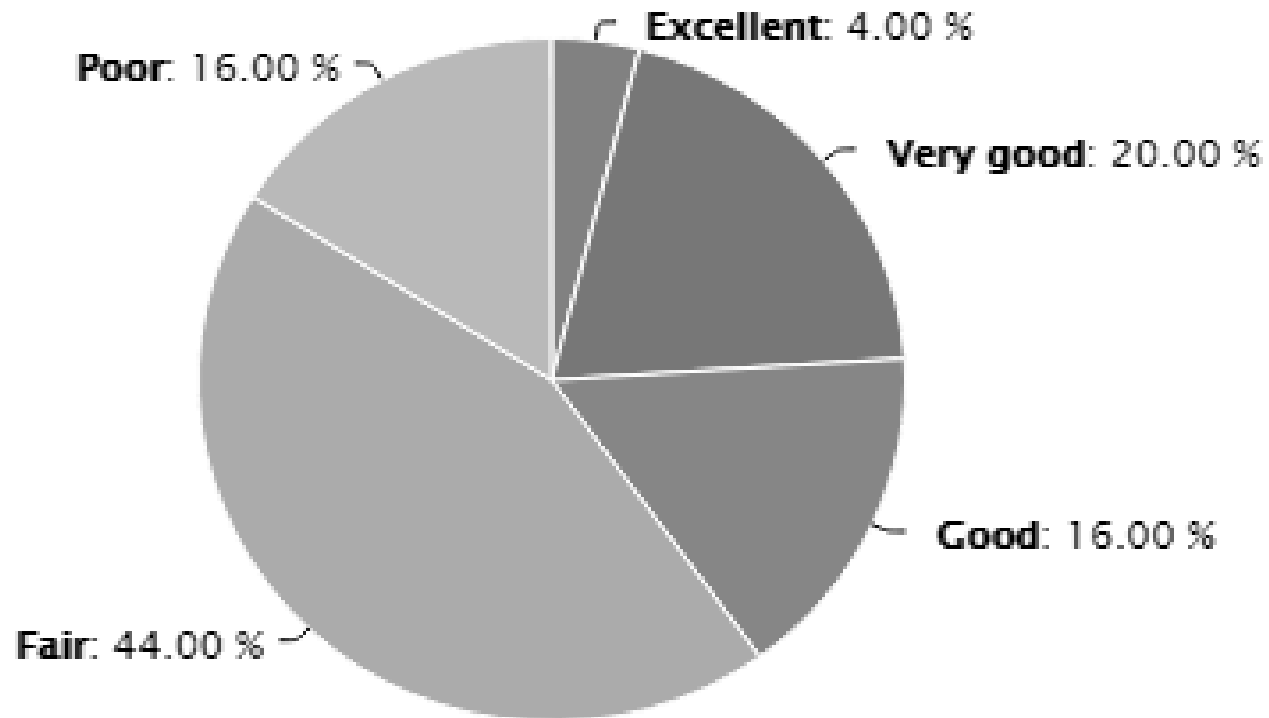


SATISFACTION WITH VR SERVICES ON A SCALE OF 1 (POOR) TO 5 (EXCELLENT)

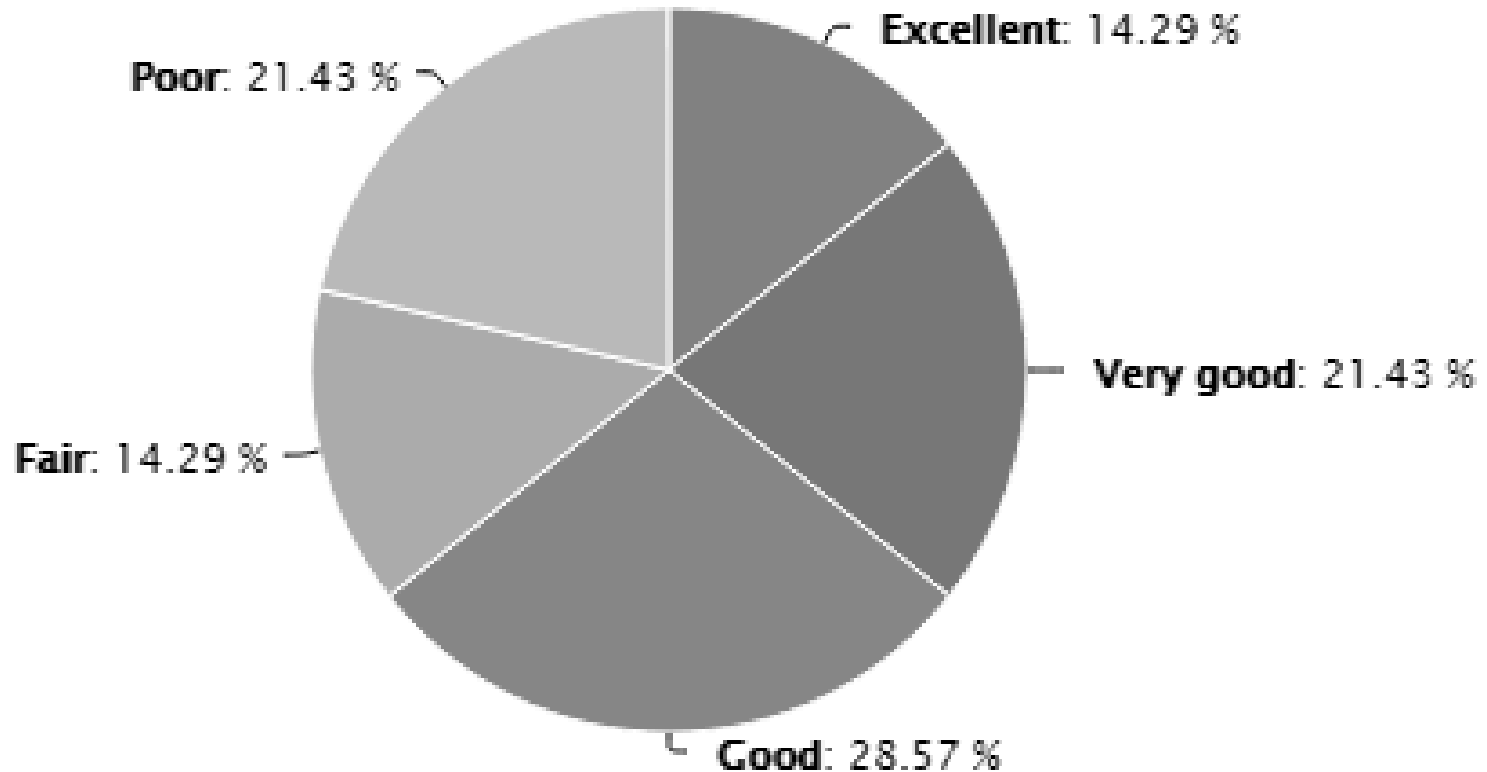


Data points represent averages and standard deviation.

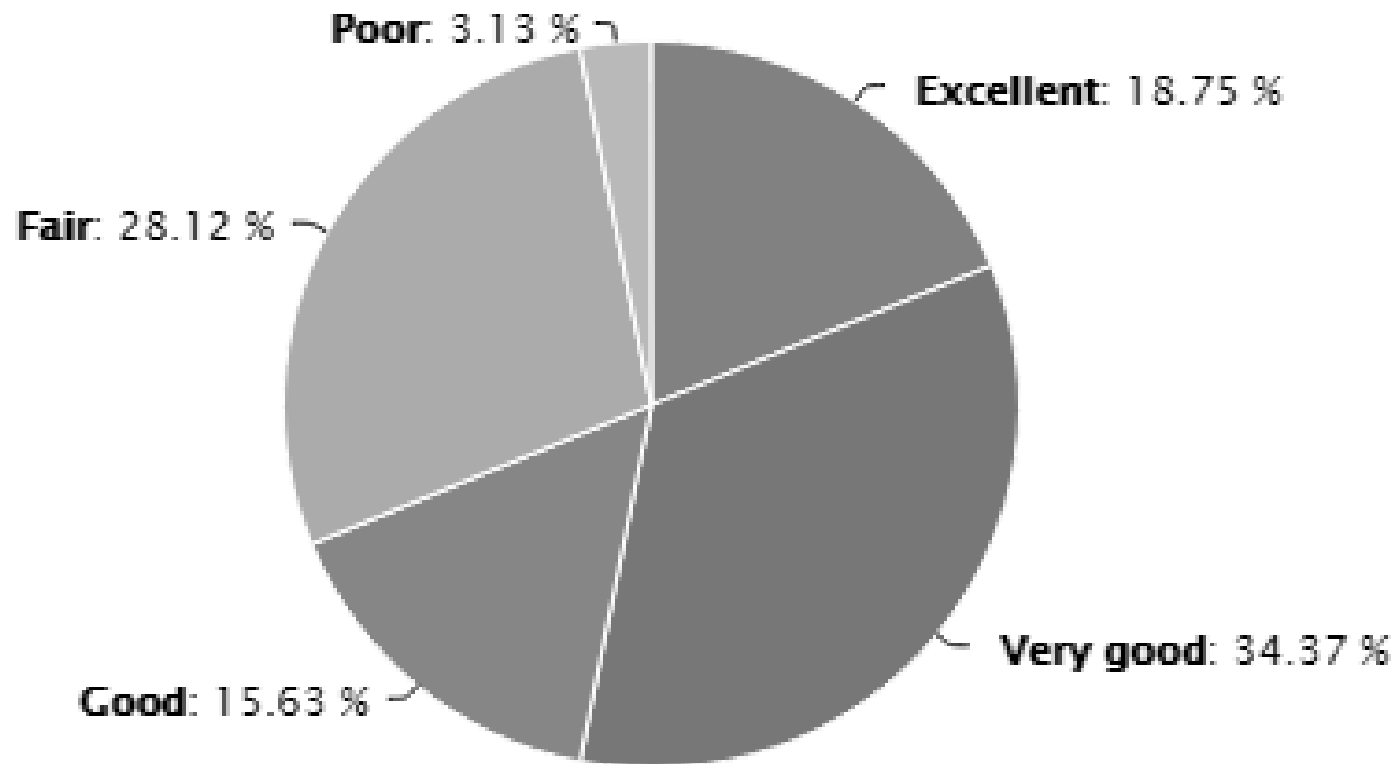
WORK EXPLORATION



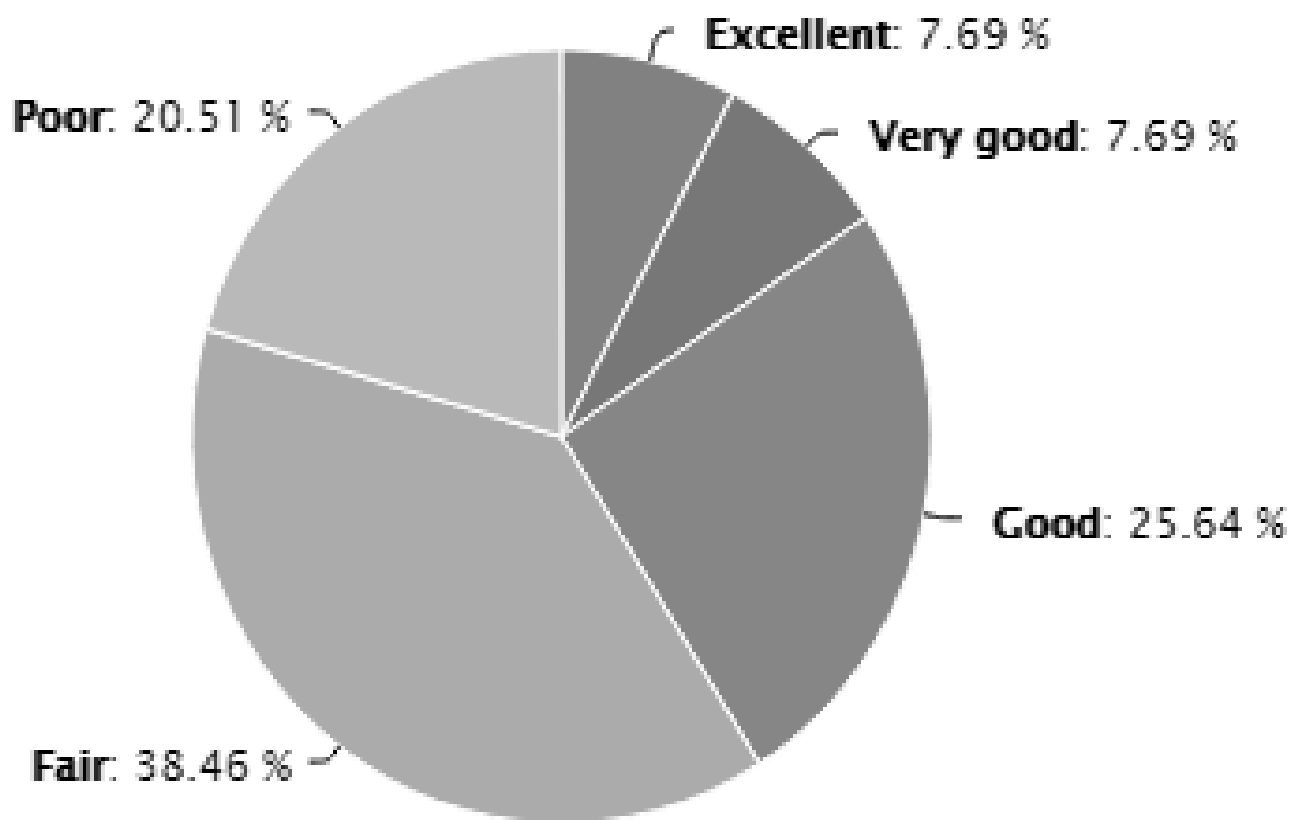
WORK ADJUSTMENT TRAINING



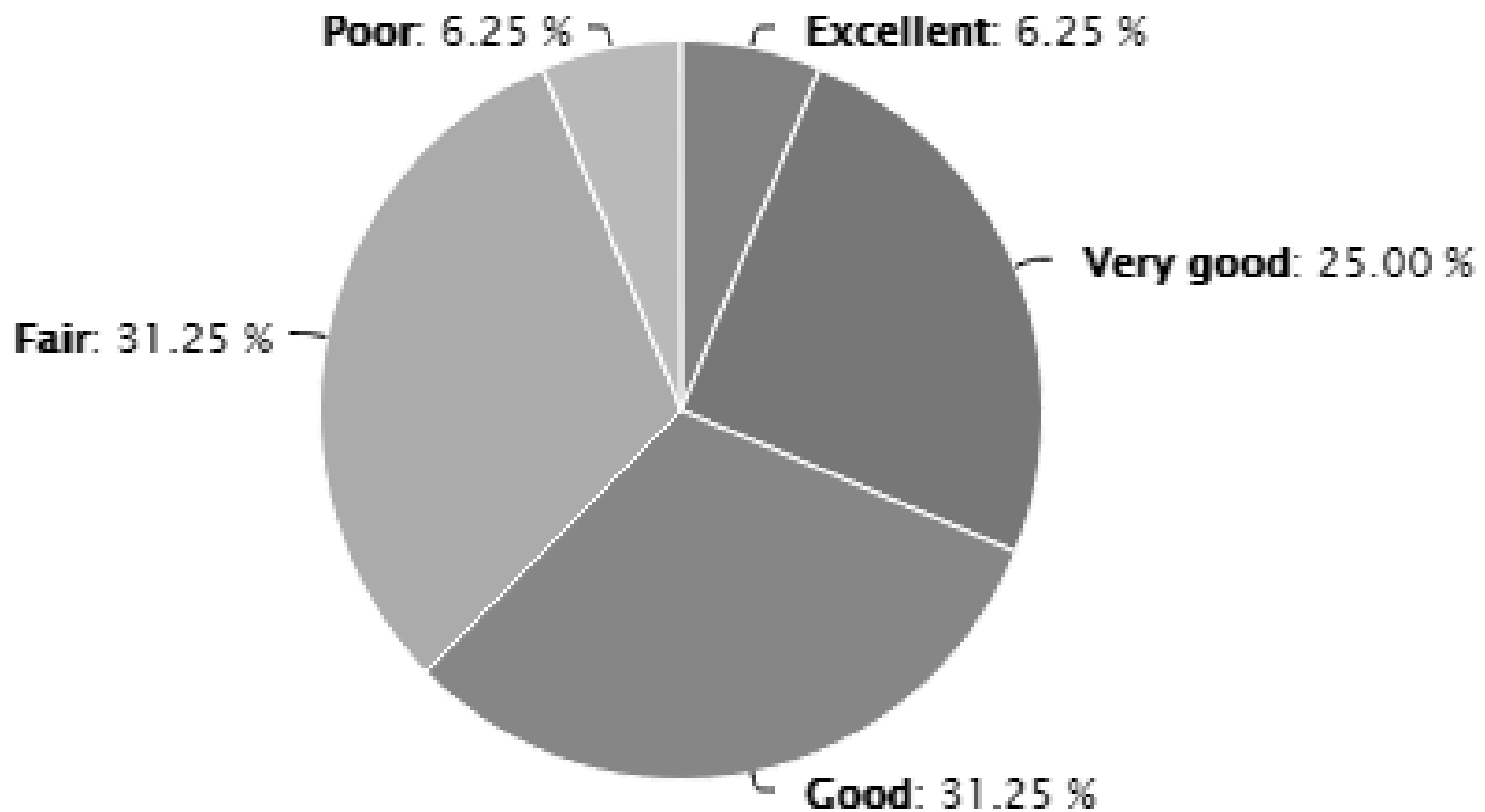
PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATIONS



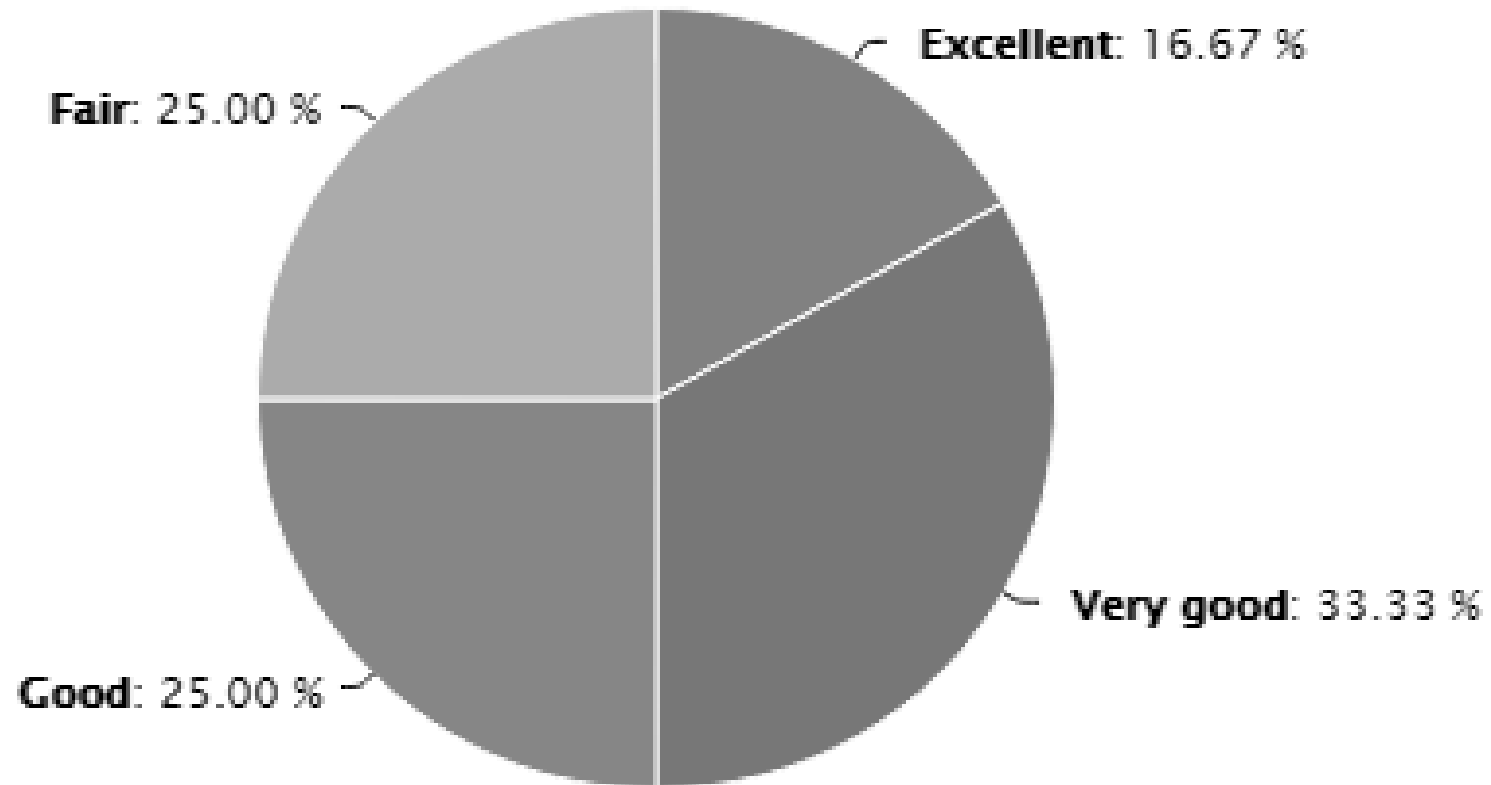
VOCATIONAL EVALUATIONS



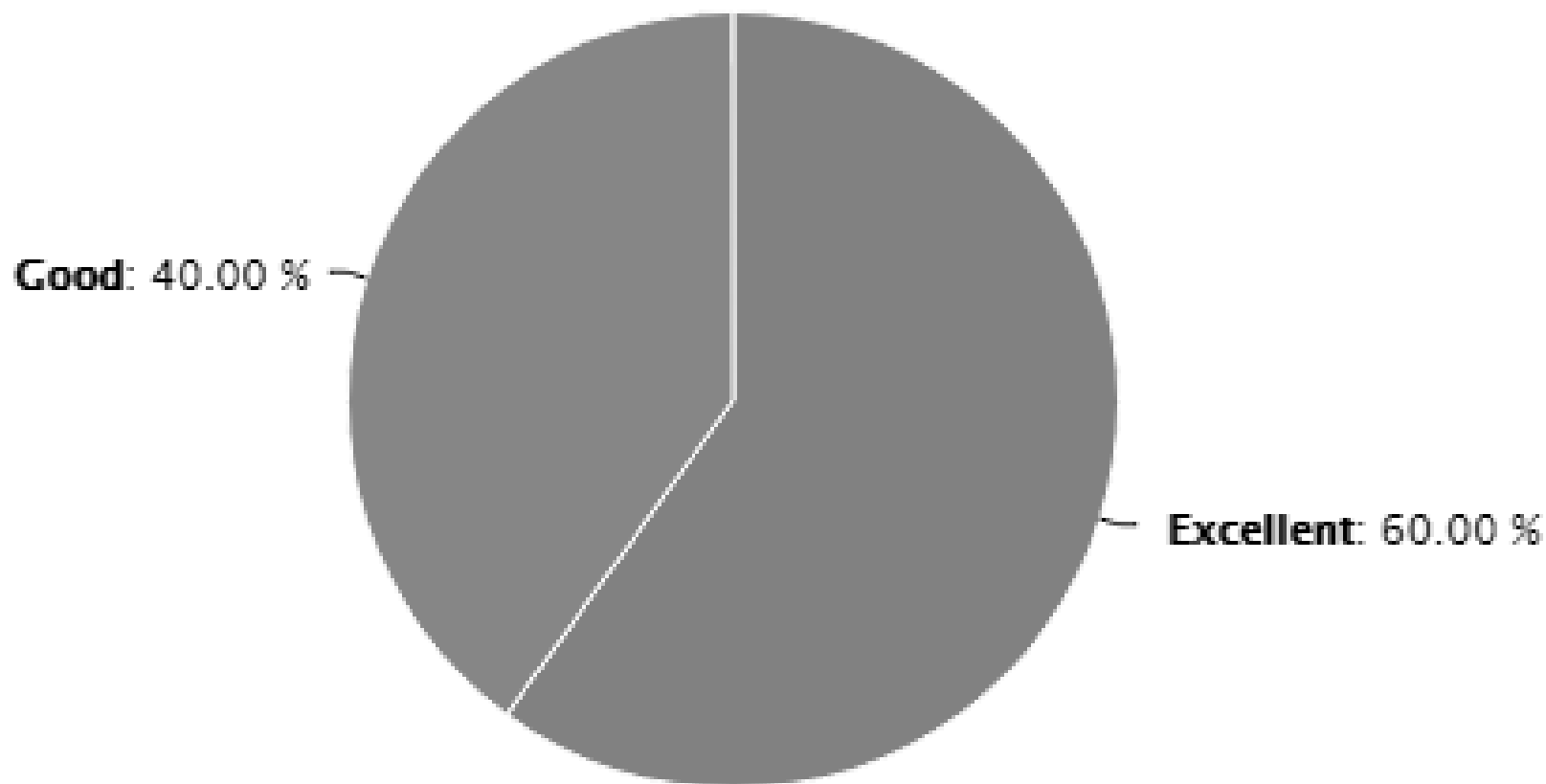
FUNCTIONAL CAPACITY EVALUATION



SUPPORTIVE EDUCATION



ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY



**DEPARTMENT OF
DEVELOPMENTAL
DISABILITIES**

**VOCATIONAL
RECOMMENDATIONS**

REAL WORK

For Center-Based Employment, clients frequently run out of real work and instead have to do unpaid practice work (sorting blocks, etc.). There needs to be a greatly increased effort to find real work for clients, which will significantly raise their salaries and job experience. Therefore:

- DDD should incentivize agencies to increase the amount of real work and salaries
- Consider allocating funds for a dedicated staff person to outreach to the business community to find work for clients
 - this requires a very different skill set (sales) than for the staff that supervise and support the clients at work (therapist).

ROTATE JOBS

Rotate clients between different jobs to expand their job skills.

DAY TREATMENT

Encourage clients in day treatment programs (and their parents/guardians) to tour Center-Based and Group-Based Employment opportunities, and to consider participating in those programs.

FADE SUPPORTS

Train staff to fade supports and to work on increasing independence of clients so they can transition to more independent work.

ASD TRAINING

Provide training to DDD support coordinators and providers about how to work with adults with ASD and increase their vocational skills and opportunities.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

RECOMMENDATIONS

DDD-VR GAP

Eliminate the gap between DDD and VR, so that people who don't qualify for one are eligible for the other. Although this seemed to be a relatively rare problem (only 6% were denied VR services), it is important to close the gap between agencies.

CREATE AUTISM- KNOWLEDGEABLE STAFF

Dedicate 5-10% of VR Support Coordinators to receive basic training about ASD, and send ASD clients to them.

- In Arizona, VR served 1206 adults with ASD, which is about 7% of all VR clients.
- Encourage VR provider agencies to hire some staff with pre-existing ASD experience such as special education teachers/aides, parents of individuals with ASD, etc.

Similarly, ask provider agencies to hire and/or train autism-knowledgeable Job Coaches, and provide a list of those specific agencies to ASD clients.

RAISE EXPECTATIONS

People with ASD are often under-employed at tasks below their ability, resulting in lower salaries and lower job satisfaction. Recognize that some individuals with ASD have average or above average intellectual capabilities, and may have specific areas of vocational strengths.

EXPAND INITIAL ROLE OF JOB COACHES

Job coaches need to help with finding a job, and to do a pre-interview with employers to explain ASD and their client's strengths and disability.

Also provide job shadowing prior to starting employment, to ensure that job is a good match for client's interest and ability, and to identify potential problems including sensory problems.

WORKSITE PEER MENTORS TO PARTIALLY REPLACE JOB COACHES

Ask each employer to assign a worksite peer mentor to spend 5-10% of their time to assist the ASD client with both work skills and social skills.

Worksite peer mentors should provide regular feedback to the ASD client about problems so that they can improve and stay employed.

Give the worksite mentor and the employer basic training about ASD, and brief explanation to co-workers if appropriate.

WORKSITE PEER MENTORS

CONTINUED

The worksite peer mentor has several advantages over a traditional job coach:

- Always present at the job, so immediately available whenever a problem arise;
- Knowledgeable about work requirements and social interactions/environment;
- No time wasted driving from one client to another.

INCREASED COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS/CAREGIVERS

Worksite peer mentors should communicate with parents/caregivers on a frequent basis, such as 1/week.

It is highly recommended that, if parents/caregivers are involved with the client that they also are informed of problems at work so that they can help work with the client to deal with those problems before they escalate.

COLLEGE WORK EXPERIENCE/TRAINING

Encourage college students to do part-time or summer work, to ensure that they have work experience by the time they graduate.

This might require taking a lighter course load to allow time for work, but will likely be important to help with job placement after graduation.

SUMMARY

Some adults with ASD are employed, but many are unemployed or underemployed

Many barriers to employment, including primarily interviewing and lack of understanding of ASD

Several recommendations have been made to significantly improve job placement