



Newsletter



68.4% of adults with disabilities are **striving to work**



28.4% of working adults with disabilities work **flexible schedules**



14% of working adults with disabilities have **modified job duties**

Americans with Disabilities in the Workplace

Rodger DeRose, Kessler Foundation president and CEO, spoke with C-SPAN about the key findings of our survey. Watch at www.c-span.org.

STRIVING TO WORK

Kessler Foundation national survey — the first of its kind — reveals positive employment experiences for people with disabilities

As we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, we have some exciting news on the employment outlook for people with disabilities. In June, results from our 2015 National Employment & Disability Survey were announced on Capitol Hill. The main finding: Americans with disabilities are striving to work and overcoming barriers to enter the workforce.

Sponsored by Kessler Foundation and conducted by the University of New Hampshire, the survey identifies strategies that Americans with disabilities use to search for work and navigate barriers, accommodations that are helpful to obtain and maintain employment, and factors that contribute to unemployment. This is the first national survey to examine the workplace experiences of people with disabilities and identify successful strategies that

“This new survey will help us gain insight into what strategies work and do not work for improving employment outcomes for this talented population.”

-Elaine E. Katz, senior vice president of grants and communications

people with disabilities have used to find and maintain employment.

The survey revealed that more than 68% of people with disabilities are working or involved in work-related activities. They are actively preparing for employment,

searching for jobs, working, and looking for more hours. Importantly, Americans with disabilities are also overcoming barriers to employment, such as not enough education or training, employers assuming that they cannot do the job, lack of transportation, and family discouragement. While more work needs to be done, these are positive signs of improved employment outcomes for people with disabilities.

For complete survey results or to learn how you can help Kessler Foundation increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities, visit us online at www.kesslerfoundation.org. ■



LEARNING TO LIVE WITH MS

Kessler Foundation researchers teach people with MS to recognize emotions of others



Meg Balter, MS patient and Kessler Foundation research participant

At age 22, Meg Balter was an active, young woman just beginning her career as a registered nurse. When she started having trouble walking down stairs, she knew something was wrong. A neurologist diagnosed Meg with multiple sclerosis (MS), a disease of the brain and spinal cord that affects people in many different ways. MS is the most common neurological disease affecting young adults.

Today, Meg has a full and active life, despite the uncertainties of living with

Meg's family, who inspires her to manage her symptoms of MS



MS. She owes this in part to participating in Kessler Foundation's MS research, which focuses on finding ways to cope with symptoms, including the loss of the ability to recognize emotions.

Imagine you're Meg—unable to recognize when your child is scared or when your spouse is proud of you. It's a skill we don't notice we have, until we lose it, says Helen Genova, PhD, a research scientist at Kessler Foundation.

“Because deficits in emotional processing can have a significant negative impact on social interactions and quality of life,” she says, “finding ways to treat these deficits is critical to improving the lives of individuals with MS.”

Genova and her colleagues are working to change that by studying the mechanisms that allow us to recognize emotions—it's one of the first studies of its kind. Our researchers developed a 12-week training course to teach

Kessler Foundation's MS research focuses on:

- ✓ Fatigue
- ✓ Depression
- ✓ Sleep disturbances
- ✓ Personality changes
- ✓ Caregiver burden
- ✓ Recognizing emotions
- ✓ Employment

Helen Genova, PhD, research scientist at Kessler Foundation



people with MS, including Meg, how to quickly identify the facial signs of the six universal emotions: happiness, sadness, fear, anger, surprise and disgust.

For example, tight lips and tension between the eyebrows indicate anger. Wide-open eyes, raised eyebrows, and an O-shaped mouth indicate surprise. After training, Meg and others with MS are better able to recognize emotions.

“Once they understand the problem, there are a few things they can do,” Genova says. “No. 1, they shouldn't isolate themselves...because facial recognition is a use-it-or-lose-it type of thing. The less you are with other people, the greater this problem could become.”

To learn more about this study and other Kessler Foundation studies, visit www.kesslerfoundation.org. ■

YOUR SUPPORT MATTERS



Kessler Foundation's community of dedicated, committed friends gives generously to change the lives of people with disabilities. You are an essential partner in our mission—helping people take first steps; improve the ability to think, learn and remember; and overcome obstacles to employment. To give, visit www.KesslerFoundation.org/give or contact Michele Pignatello at 973.324.8363 or mpignatello@kesslerfoundation.org. Thank you.

After becoming paralyzed, Chris Tagatac can get out of his wheelchair and walk again, thanks to the Ekso robotic exoskeleton, Kessler Foundation and the support of donors like you.

LIFE AFTER STROKE

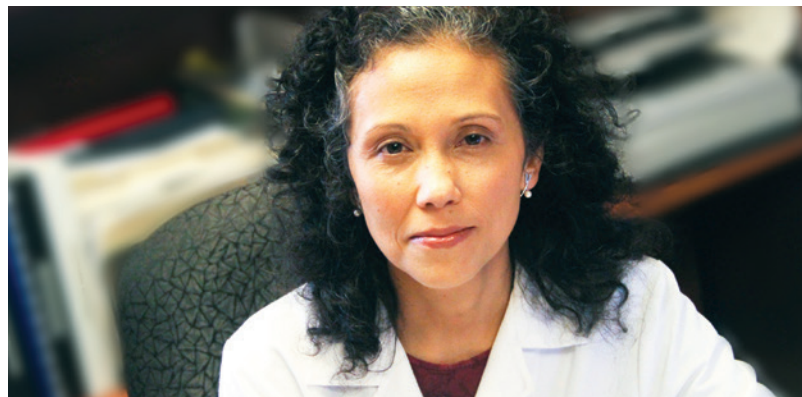
Web-based training helps clinicians better diagnose and treat spatial neglect in stroke survivors

More than half of all stroke survivors experience hidden disabilities that often go undiagnosed, like spatial neglect. This complication contributes to poor recovery, longer hospital stays, and greater risk for accidents. It can interfere with sports, work, and personal care, hindering the ability to live independently and safely.

Seeing the need for better detection, researchers at Kessler Foundation developed the Kessler Foundation Neglect Assessment Process (KF-NAP™). This assessment helps therapists, scientists and physicians measure the symptoms and severity of this hidden disability.

Funded by a grant from the Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey, Kessler Foundation researchers tested the feasibility of incorporating screening and treatment for spatial neglect into acute care. The study—the first of its kind—was conducted in the high-risk population at Newark Beth Israel Hospital.

Therapists were trained to screen patients with the KF-NAP™ and treat with Kessler Foundation Prism Adaptation Therapy (KF-PAT™), using a specially developed prism therapy kit. They found 135 patients with right brain stroke, and administered the KF-NAP™ to 78. Of the 15 patients identified with



A.M. Barrett, MD, director of Stroke Rehabilitation Research

spatial neglect, 8 underwent KF-PAT™ during their stay.

“Our findings show that stroke survivors will benefit from early screening and prompt intervention,” says A.M. Barrett, MD, director of Stroke Rehabilitation Research. Training in the KF-NAP™ and KF-PAT™

is widely available via an online course at www.kflearn.org, which was created with funding from generous donors like you.

To view a free introduction video on spatial neglect by Dr. A.M. Barrett, visit our YouTube channel [KesslerFoundation](https://www.youtube.com/KesslerFoundation). ■

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Every dollar you give or raise changes the lives of people with disabilities. Visit our website to register.