The Department of Psychology
University of Massachusetts Lowell

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The Aspirations program is designed to provide adolescents and young adults with high functioning autism (HFA) or Asperger's syndrome (AS) the opportunity to discuss social and vocational skills in a small group setting. Group members are guided in ways to improve their social and vocational skills. Group leaders familiar with Autism Spectrum Disorders facilitate an atmosphere of acceptance and friendship. Developing self-awareness, social insight and independence are central themes of Aspirations.

**DISCUSSION TOPICS**
- Problem Solving
- Social Communication
- Self-Awareness
- Understanding Others
- Friends
- Employment
- Independence
- Responsibility

**WHO can participate?**
Aspirations is designed to address the needs of adolescents and young adults with high functioning autism or Asperger's syndrome. There are two separate age groups, one for 13-17 year olds, and one for 18-30 year olds.

**WHEN do we meet?**
Initially groups meet for one hour, once a week, for eight weeks. This is then followed by monthly Aspirations Alumni meetings. All meetings are held in the evening. A facilitated parent support group is held at the same time and location as the Aspirations weekly and monthly meetings.

**COST?**
The fee for the eight-week program is $150. The annual membership fee for the monthly Aspirations Alumni meetings is $120. There is no cost for the parent support groups.

**WHERE do I go?**
University of Massachusetts Lowell
Department of Psychology
Mahoney Hall
870 Broadway Street
Lowell, MA  01854

**ASPIRATIONS Director**
Ashleigh Hillier, PhD is an Assistant Professor of Psychology at the University of Massachusetts Lowell and is the Director of the Aspirations program. Her research interests include increasing our understanding of social and vocational skills of those on the autism spectrum, and how to support and develop these skills. Interested undergraduate and graduate students at UMass Lowell work with Dr. Hillier on the Aspirations program. This provides critical training opportunities to future professionals who intend to work with individuals on the autism spectrum.

**QUESTIONS?**
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