**[Start of transcript]**

**Interviewer:** All right, we are recording. And I will be asking you questions about your perspective about your child's transition to adulthood in relation to his sensory sensitivities and sensory interests. And we'll be doing something called a semi-structured interview where I have these planned questions here. But I’ll be adopting the questions to follow our conversation to actually make sure they fit for what we're talking about. Do you have any questions before we dive in?

**Interviewee:**No.

**Interviewer:** Okay, awesome. And if there's any point where you don't want to answer something because it makes you uncomfortable, that's perfectly okay. We want to make this a positive experience.

**Interviewee:**Okay.

**Interviewer:** Okay, awesome. Could you please start off by telling me about your son's sensory sensitivities and sensory interests?

**Interviewee: H**is sensory sensitivities, a lot of it is oral.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Interviewee:**Well, not all of it. I mean, there are a lot of oral sensitivities. There are tactile sensitivities, as far as touch and some sound sensitivities.

**Interviewer:** Could you give me some examples for those?

**Interviewee:**Oh, sure.As far as oral sensitivities, he hates to brush his teeth.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Interviewee:**And that's mostly due to… he just totally hates the feeling of a toothbrush.

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh.

**Interviewee:**It's been an issue for his entire life.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Interviewee:**He doesn't certain textures in his mouth.

**Interviewer:** What other texture does he dislike?

**Interviewee:**Sticky, gooey stuff. He won't go anywhere near oatmeal or anything that has a similar texture to oatmeal.

**Interviewer:**Yeah.

**Interviewee:**He really prefers crunchy stuff.

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh. Will he go out of his way to find crunchy items?

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** What types of crunchy? Oh, sorry.

**Interviewee:** Unfortunately, chips, rice cakes. A lot of stuff that's crunchy. And because of that too, he'll chew on things, like pen caps. He'll chew on the tops of water bottles or the caps to water bottles.

**Interviewer:** Wow. And you also mentioned sounds. Can you talk a little bit about that?

**Interviewee:** Yeah. When he was young, it was much, much worse than it is now.

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh.

**Interviewee:** But screeching type sounds, sirens.

**Interviewer:** And so, when he's exposed to those types of sounds well, how does he react to those?

**Interviewee:** Well, if I'm the only one around, he'll scream.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Interviewee:** If he's around other people, he'll kind of just shudder.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Interviewee:** **[03:00]** But when he's around me, he'll just scream.

**Interviewer:** Gotcha. And also, in your form that you filled out, like the screening, you also mentioned bright lights.

**Interviewee**: Yeah. He doesn't care for bright lights, either. He spends most of the time with the lights off when he's in his bedroom, or he's in this room, the playroom. He likes to have the curtains drawn. Although sometimes he likes a little bit of light. Like he'll push the curtains away to get a little bit of sunlight in there.

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh.

**Interviewee:** He doesn't bright lights like overhead lights.

**Interviewer:** What about if he's outside and it's a sunny day. Does he need sunglasses? Will he just not go outside those days?

**Interviewee:** No, he'll go outside. He doesn't spend a lot of time actually outside. I mean, he'll go from the house to the car and from the car to somewhere indoors.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Interviewee:** He doesn't spend a lot of time outside, and he doesn't like wearing sunglasses.

**Interviewer:** Gotcha. I don't really either. So, I understand. **[Both laughing].** You also talked about tactile things. Are there certain textures he seeks out or certain textures he avoids?

**Interviewee:** He has a real problem with tags in his clothing. I have to cut out the tags in his clothing. Sometimes the seams inside his socks bother him. Let's see tactile things... Well, water bottles too. He'll hold them in his hand for a long time and do this and crunch them.

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh. Yeah.

**Interviewee:** And he'll do that for real long periods of time.

**Interviewer:** And is this the disposable water bottles or the more trendy...?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, the plastic disposable water bottles. He'll crunch onto those and do this to them for very long periods of time.

**Interviewer:** Are there other things that he kind of crunches with his hands like that repetitively?

**Interviewee:** Let's see. I'm trying to think off the top of my head… No.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Interviewee:** He's been doing that with water bottles for a very, very, very long time.

**Interviewer:** Got you. And how have his sensory sensitivities changed over time? You said that was constant. How else have his other sensory sensitivities changed or remained the same?

**Interviewee:** The oral sensitivity has remained the same, especially the tooth brushing. Though most of his other sensitivities have gotten a lot better. They were much worse when he was younger. When he was younger, he wouldn't even walk barefoot on grass. He got freaked out, walking barefoot on grass. He doesn't mind walking barefoot now. He walks barefoot around the house a lot.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Interviewee:** **[06:00]** But when he was younger, he didn't like going barefoot at all. He was much more sound-sensitive and light-sensitive too (when he was younger). Music boxes used to freak them out or even little ornaments, animated ornaments from a Christmas tree that play music. Those things would freak him out. Let's see. And lights too—strobing types of lights and flashing lights.

**Interviewer:** And he didn't those before?

**Interviewee:** Oh, no.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Interviewee:** He's okay with them now. When he was younger, not at all [**trails off**].

**Interviewer:** At what point in time did you notice this change for both light and sound and texture too.

**Interviewee:** I would probably say nearing the end of elementary school.

**Interviewer:** And do you think these changes that you're talking about are related to any independence that he might've gained during that period of time?

**Interviewee:** You mean how I think he overcame them. Is that what you mean?

**Interviewer:** So I guess -- yes, I'd love to hear too. The question specifically is, “*Do you think any changes relate to independence that he's gained?”* Just because we are looking at this intersection of sensory sensitivities in this transition to adulthood.

**Interviewee:** Okay. So ask me the question again.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. Do you think these changes that you've noticed are related to any independence that he gained over time?

**Interviewee:** I don't think that those changes are related to independence. I think those changes are related to all the therapies that he had when he was younger. He had early intervention, and he had an IEP, and he had quite a few years of occupational therapy and physical therapy. And I think that that helped an awful lot, especially that sensory integration stuff.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. So that's actually my next question for you. So how has he been able to manage the sensitivities?

**Interviewee:** Overall, Pretty well. I mean, they're not, like I said, they're not as bad as they were when he was younger. How does he manage them? Well, he'll give me his clothes and ask me to cut the tags out [**laughing].**

**Interviewer:**Yeah.

**Interviewee:** You know. And things like he'll rearrange his socks until it feels comfortable because sometimes the seam gets him all freaked out.

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh.

**Interviewee:** He manages them pretty well. I think he worked really hard when he's not at home to manage a lot of these things. So that he doesn't participate in whatever he needs to cope with it while he's outside.

**Interviewer:** **[09:00]** Uh-huh.

**Interviewee:** But when he's home, it's sort of -- like it's been all saved up.

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh.

**Interviewee:** And then when he gets home, that's when he's chewing on water bottles, and he's crunching water bottles, and he's doing all that kind of stuff because he'll refrain from doing it when he's outside the house.

**Interviewer:** And do you ever notice that when you're with him out in public versus at home? Or do you hear about that from his teachers? I guess pre-COVID.

**Interviewee:** Well, not from his teachers, but just from other people that are around him. He doesn't participate in those sorts of behaviors when he's with other people. He's with my dad a lot and some of his friends.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Interviewee:** He just doesn't do those things outside the house, and he's in college, and he can't do those things in a classroom.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, absolutely.

**Interviewee:** You know, but a lot of times, unfortunately, sometimes we fight about it because it drives me crazy. And I’ll tell them to knock it off. And I’ll say, *“Why do you only do this in front of me and not other people?”*

**Interviewer:** What does he say?

**Interviewee:** because he has to control it when he's with other people, and he doesn't have to control it with me.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. This was his safe spot, and you're his safe person.

**Interviewee:** Yeah, exactly.

**Interviewer:** And for loud sounds, has he ever worn headphones or earbuds to help him with that?

**Interviewee:** He wears earbuds a lot.

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh.

**Interviewee:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** And you talked about therapies. How did those therapies help him, do you think?

**Interviewee:** Oh, I think they helped them a lot, especially the sensory integration therapies. Although we still haven't overcome the business with the toothbrush.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Interviewee:** We tried the little -- and I don't know how much you know about these sorts of things. But they have this -- it's not really a toothbrush, but it's this little plastic thing that has nubbies on it that they give to the little kids to put in their mouth to help them desensitize their mouth.

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh.

**Interviewee:** And we use that with him for years, but he just hasn't gotten over the oral sensitivity. A lot of the other stuff were activities like big buckets full of dried beans, sticking the hands in there, and doing that kind of stuff.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. And a lot of sensory, tactile activities. We did those a lot with him, and I think that those helped a lot.

**Interviewer:** So you talked about OT and IEP in the sensory inoculation therapies. Were there other therapies that he received or other interventions?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, he had occupational therapy. He had a really hard time with zippers. He couldn't do zippers. He couldn't tie his shoes, [**12:00]** holding pencils, cutting with scissors. He still has a real hard time with scissors.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Interviewee:** Using a knife and fork. He doesn't have trouble with a knife and fork anymore. But that's why he had occupational therapy, a lot of stuff like that. He couldn't even do his own zippers, buttons, stuff like that.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. And is he better at those now?

**Interviewee:** Oh yeah. He still has a lot of trouble with scissors, though.

**Interviewer:** They're a little hard sometimes. So, yeah. Regarding the oral fixation and disliking the toothbrush, how do you work through that in terms of his oral hygiene?

**Interviewee:** It's difficult.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Interviewee:** Because I have to remind him to brush his teeth, and he'll avoid it. So I put out mouthwash and have them rinse with mouthwash, but that's about it.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Interviewee:** He avoids the dentist too, which is a problem.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. I'm sure. Does he have other oral sensitivities besides brushing his teeth?

**Interviewee:** Just some of the food textures like oatmeal.

**Interviewer:** Absolutely. And then --

**Interviewee:** and I think he does have other oral sensitivities, but because he likes to make sounds with his mouth. Like he'll put something to drink, fluid in his mouth, and he'll like inhale it with it in his mouth. So it vibrates in his mouth.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Interviewee:** So those are some oral things that he does. He likes to make noises with his lips. So his face vibrates, you know what I mean?

**Interviewer:** Yeah. Does he seek out other vibrating experiences, like a massage chair or something that?

**Interviewee:** No.

**Interviewer:** And then if he is faced with sensitive sensory experiences that he doesn't like, like the teeth brushing or like the gooey oatmeal, or the loud noises, does that cause anxiety for him?

**Interviewee:** I don't know if it causes anxiety. But he'll totally avoid it. He'll just refuse.

**Interviewer:** Got you. And has that always been the case for him? Like do you ever think it's causing --

**Interviewee:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Oh, so you don't think it's ever caused anxiety?

**Interviewee:** I don't think that's caused anxiety. He has a lot of anxiety, but I don't think that his oral sensitivities cause anxiety.

**Interviewer:** What about his other sensitivities?

**Interviewee:** I don't think his other sensitivities cause anxiety. I think the anxiety he has, and this is just my personal opinion. I think it's a lot of social anxiety.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Interviewee:** Although maybe some of the oral stuff does cause him anxiety, which is why he refuses to go to a dentist.

**Interviewer:** **[15:00]** That’s fair.

**Interviewee:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** A lot of people don't like going to the dentist.

**Interviewee:** Yeah. Well, nobody does, but a lot of us, you know, you just bite the bullet and go.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Interviewee:** He will not go.

**Interviewer:** Has it caused a fight between you if you make him go?

**Interviewee:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. Now thinking broadly and towards the future, what goals or hopes do you have for your son in terms of his sensory sensitivities and sensory interests?

**Interviewee:** Well, I certainly hope he can overcome the toothbrush and stuff. I think that a lot of the other stuff he copes with really well. You know it’s cutting tags out of clothing or buying tag-less clothing and stuff like that. That's not that big of a deal. A lot of people have those issues too. You know, so it's easy to cope. You can buy stuff without tags; you can take the tags out. You know, but this business about not brushing his teeth is a real problem.

**Interviewer:** Totally. So you've mentioned that he has trouble with scissors. Is that why you have to cut it out, or is he able to cut out the tags himself?

**Interviewee:** No, I cut them out.

**Interviewer:** Got you. And so switching gears a little bit to our next chunk of questions and we'll come back to sensory in a little bit.

**Interviewee:** Okay.

**Interviewer:** As your son has grown up and aged a bit, how has his and your community reacted to his sensory sensitivities and sensory interests?

**Interviewee:** I'm not sure. I don’t know what you mean by how has the community reacted to them.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, totally. Like, are people in your life, whether it's in his life, whether it's your family, you know, school, work, religious groups. Are they understanding of his sensory needs? Are they accepting, accommodating?

**Interviewee:** They're accepting of them. That would be family members. I don't think that people that aren't family really are aware of them.

**Interviewer:** Because he copes so well.

**Interviewee:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Gotcha.

**Interviewee:** Or he avoids the situation.

**Interviewer:** [**Laughter**] absolutely. Can you give an example of a situation that he would avoid because of them?

**Interviewee:** Well, going to the dentist.

**Interviewer:** Oh, fair. [**Both laughing**] And have they always been accepting -- like the people who know him. Like when he was younger, was it the same, or was it different?

**Interviewee:** No, when he was younger, it was the same. My family is -- well, his dad isn't really very accepting actually.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Interviewee:** That's a good point—my family's very understanding about all of this kind of stuff.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Interviewee:** And I think that's because I just come from a well-educated family. [**18:00]** My parents were in the medical field. My mom has an advanced degree in psychology, so we all kind of understand all this kind of stuff.

**Interviewer:** Totally.

**Interviewee:** His dad, on the other hand, doesn't. And you should know his dad and I aren't married anymore. We haven't been for a long time. And his dad would punish him for this kind of stuff. So, you know, my family was very accepting. I don't think that a lot of people on the outside knew what was going on. But his dad used to punish him for this.

**Interviewer:** I'm sorry to hear that.

**Interviewee:** Yeah, me too.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. I'm sure that must've been hard.

**Interviewee:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** So you just talked about family, what about school? Is his school accepting and accommodating of him?

**Interviewee:** Yeah. Well, he's in college now, so it's not really an issue.

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh.

**Interviewee:** Although his school does have a Special Ed office that he can use if he chooses to. I keep encouraging him to, but he refuses to because I think it's a great resource that they have it.

**Interviewer:** Totally.

**Interviewee:** And I really think you should use it. But he hasn't yet. And it doesn't present any problems for him at school. So that's not really an issue. When he was younger, the school was accommodating, you know, because he had an IEP.

**Interviewer:** Got you. What about family friends? Were they all accepting and accommodating?

**Interviewee:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** That's great. Again, thinking to the future, what are your hopes or worries about how his community will react in the future or how they will accept or accommodate him?

**Interviewee:** Well, one of my biggest worries is him being able to get a job.

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh.

**Interviewee:** Because he has a lot of anxiety and because some of the issues that he has that are beyond sensory issues, he's, he's really afraid of getting a job, and he's afraid of people not understanding him. And that's actually -- my biggest fear is him not being able to get a job.

**Interviewer:** Are you worried that people will not see the entirety of him and won't hire him because of that? Is there a way you can explain your worry a little bit?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, a lot of the worry is his worry. A lot of times, when he's in a new situation, he has a lot of anxiety. But as time goes by, he gets more comfortable with things. It's just getting him over that initial hurdle. [**21:00]** That’s the problem. So he has this terrible fear that he's going to get fired immediately because sometimes he has difficulty following directions. So he's afraid that if he does something wrong that he's going to get fired or chewed out. And he's an emotional kid even at 20 years old -- I can yell at him all I want, he doesn't care. If somebody else yells at them, he'll cry.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Interviewee:** So he's worried about all those kinds of things. He drives now, but it took me a year to get him behind the wheel of a car. So he was really terrified, and it took a long time. And he participates in a community agency local in our town. And he does a lot of work for them. And I try to explain to him that what he's actually doing there is a job. It's just that he's volunteering. He doesn't get paid. But everything that he does there, he can do at a job and get paid for. It's just that I think the pressure -- there's no pressure being a volunteer with what he's doing as opposed to having a job.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. It's like the framing of it.

**Interviewee:** Exactly.

**Interviewer:** And what types of tasks does he do at that volunteer position?

**Interviewee:** Well, he's a member of the local emergency management agency. So he does office work, computer work, and social media for the agency. He does filing and sort of clerical type stuff. But then also he does heavy lifting like if it's really hot outside, they set up cooling stations in the local schools for elderly and whatever. And they set up cots and bring cases of water, stuff like that.

**Interviewer:** That's great.

**Interviewee:** Like stuff around found at Town Hall, he'll put up cones to direct traffic, and he does direct traffic. Stuff like that.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. That's all definitely very marketable and very transferable for sure.

**Interviewee:** Right. He has transferable skills, and I try to tell him that. But, like you said, when it's framed differently, then suddenly there's a lot of anxiety.

**Interviewer:** Absolutely. Thank you. So we're going to shift a little bit, but that was very related to what we're going to talk about next. In this transition to adulthood, where do you see your son?

**Interviewee:** Where do I see my son...? I see my son right now at about 15 years old. I think that he can get where he needs to be. He's just going to be behind everywhere else. [**24:00]** But I also think he needs some training. And I don't know where to get training for adults on the autism spectrum.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, absolutely. In terms of independent skills that he does have, could you describe some of them?

**Interviewee:** He can cook? Not extremely well, his repertoire is limited. He can make grilled cheese sandwiches and, you know, microwave things, put things in the toaster oven. But that's okay. So, he can do that. He can pump gas. He has a driver's license. Let's see. He's going to need some help learning how to pay bills and all that kind of stuff. I just got him a credit card. Yeah, but I keep a tight rein on that.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Interviewee:** Because these are things that he needs to know how to do.

**Interviewer:** Totally.

**Interviewee:** So, we're just gonna do them slow and in small steps.

**Interviewer:** Absolutely. I have a couple of follow up questions if that's okay.

**Interviewee:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** So, you said you're, he's gonna need someone to teach him about paying bills. Does he understand the concept of money and just need practice paying bills, or is he struggling to understand money as a concept?

**Interviewee:** No, he -- oh, believe me. He understands money [**both laughing**] hereally understands money. And he has a checking account. When it comes to paying bills, he just gets really overwhelmed. You know, when you say paying bills, he sees this great, big, huge thing that's insurmountable. And for him, everything needs to be broken down into small pieces. Otherwise, he just gets so anxious and so overwhelmed—same thing with school when he has to do papers. Like sometimes, he'll have to take the syllabus, and I’ll have to draw lines and say, “O*kay, only right now, only do this. Only worry about this. Don't worry about anything else. Just do this right now.”*

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Interviewee:** So things have to be broken down into chunks. Otherwise, he just gets too overwhelmed and anxious. And when it, like I said, when it comes to paying bills if you say “paying bills”, he just sees this great, big, huge, thing.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. Got you. Absolutely. That makes sense. It can be overwhelming when you don't fully have practice with it, though. And so you mentioned he can cook simple things for himself. Can he also shop for the food himself and like make lists?

**Interviewee:** Yeah. The lists are usually full of a lot of junk food, though [**both laughing**]. That's a bit of an issue. When it comes to making proper choices, [**27:00]** that’s a bit of an issue. You know, because if he could eat boxed macaroni and cheese all the time, he'd eat boxed macaroni and cheese all the time.

**Interviewer:** And that doesn't bother him, even though it's a little bit squishy in texture.

**Interviewee:** Yeah, he likes Mac and cheese. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Okay. You mentioned he has a couple of friends. Is he able to manage your social life as well?

**Interviewee:** Well, all the friends that he has are related to that volunteer agency, that agency that he volunteers for. He spends a lot of time with them.

**Interviewer:** That's great.

**Interviewee:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** And does he talk to them outside of volunteer events?

**Interviewee:** Yes, he does.

**Interviewer:** And does he initiate those interactions, or do his friends usually initiate?

**Interviewee:** No. Sometimes he does too. He has a real interest in the weather, and one of the guys at the volunteer agency is a meteorologist, so he'll help text him, and he'll call him if he sees something on the radar. He has a real interest, and he's got like this radar app on his phone. And he'll call the guy at the emergency agency and say, *“Do you see that we're under a thunderstorm watch,”* or whatever. So no, he'll initiate it.

**Interviewer:** That's great. That's awesome. And then, in terms of daily care activities, is he able to take care of himself (besides brushing his teeth)?

**Interviewee:** I have to chase after him to shower and all that. And, he's not really very good at it.

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh.

**Interviewee:** I don't know how else to say it.

**Interviewer:** That's okay.

**Interviewee:** He's not really very good at personal hygiene, and I have to chase him.

**Interviewer:** You talked about job anxiety. Does he want a job, even if he's nervous about getting a job?

**Interviewee:** Yes, he does. He's just super anxious about doing that.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, absolutely. And then does he ever express interest in wanting to live on his own?

**Interviewee:** Not really.

**Interviewer:** So I'm assuming he commutes to school, sorry.

**Interviewee:** Yes, he does. He commutes to school.

**Interviewer:** Sorry, I didn't mean to cut you off. What were you saying?

**Interviewee:** No, that's fine. He commutes to school.

**Interviewer:** Okay, awesome. Thank you. And so you -- in the beginning of this, you mentioned that you think he'll be able to achieve more. What types of skills do you think he'll be able to achieve with additional supports?

**Interviewee:** I think he'll be able to learn how to pay bills and stuff that.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Interviewee:** He's very left-brain. And I'm sure he can accomplish those kinds of things once he starts applying himself. [**30:00]** Yeah, he'll be able to do those things.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. And then what do you think will help him move into adulthood more? Like are there particular services or interventions that you think would help him?

**Interviewee:** Well, I don't know what kinds of programs are available for adults or young adults, autism spectrum disorders. I don't know if are any type of training programs for people like him to help him learn how to interview. And what to expect in the workplace and that kind of thing.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Interviewee:** I don't know if there are any programs like that. It would be helpful if there were.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. I watched a talk recently that talked about some practicing about that. So after the interview, I’ll send you a link to it.

**Interviewee:** Oh, great.

**Interviewer:** It was in England, so I don't know if they have a relatable service here, but maybe it'll give you a nice place to start or some contacts at least.

**Interviewee:** Okay.

**Interviewer:** So I’ll make a note, and I will send that to you.

**Interviewee:** Oh, that would be great.

**Interviewer:** I'm gonna make a note, and then I’ll ask you some more questions.

**Interviewee:** Okay.

**Interviewer:** So are you saying you don't -- like you said, you don't know what exists, but would you wish that he had like practicing opportunities? Is that kind of --

**Interviewee:** Oh yeah, absolutely. Yeah. Because I think that's what he needs. Practicing opportunities.

**Interviewer:** And now we're kind of putting these two things together, this transition to adulthood and his sensory sensitivities and sensory interests. How do they intersect for your son?

**Interviewee:** Can you ask the question again?

**Interviewer:** Yeah, I’ll rephrase it too.

**Interviewee:** Okay.

**Interviewer:** It's kind of a funky one. Basically, how do his sensory sensitivities and sensory interests impact his transition to adulthood, if at all?

**Interviewee:** Well, I don't think that they really do with the exception of the hygiene stuff.

**Interviewer:** And why do you think the hygiene stuff does impact his transition?

**Interviewee:** Well, for obvious reasons, I mean, things like bad breath [**laughing**], you know when you're around other people.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, for sure. And this specific sensitivity like to oral sensitivities, do you think that's an obstacle, a vehicle, or a bit of both towards his independence?

**Interviewee:** I don't think it's an obstacle. But I really wish it's something he would overcome.

**Interviewer:** Absolutely. And then what do you anticipate as being challenging for him as he does gain more independence in regards to his sensory sensitivities?

**Interviewee:** [**33:00]** The hygiene-related things.

**Interviewer:** Absolutely. I'm sorry if these are repetitive, but I have to ask them.

**Interviewee:** No, that's okay.

**Interviewer:** [**Laughing**] and what do you think will help him in this regard?

**Interviewee:** I'm not really sure. You know, I wish I knew how I could help him overcome the oral sensitivities and the other sensitivities.

**Interviewer:** And do you not see like his sensitivity to lights impacting this transition or this sensitivity to loud sounds?

**Interviewee:**No, I don't think that would impact him transitioning to adulthood. I don't think so.

**Interviewer:** Absolutely.

**Interviewee:** He copes with it really well.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. It sounds like he does. And so you said you don't really know what exists and you wish you did. Do you think there are gaps in the available interventions and services for kids like him or young adults like him?

**Interviewee:** Yes, I do.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Interviewee:** I mean, when he was younger, there was a lot available for him. He had an early intervention. He had an IEP, so he got all those services through an IEP. And then, when he was in middle school, he was in a social skills group. That was available. That was really good for him. I don't know what's available for someone that's 20 years old.

**Interviewer:** Absolutely.

**Interviewee:** It almost feels like they kind of age out of services. I don't know what there is for him.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. I think a lot of parents feel that way, at least from who I've spoken to. It seems a common theme of just like not knowing what even exists for their children.

**Interviewee:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** And how has your son's sensory sensitivities impacted your goals, hopes, or expectations for him as he does navigate adulthood?

**Interviewee:** Just brushing those teeth.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, absolutely.

**Interviewee:** You know, and I laugh about it, but I mean, I worry about it. If he doesn't brush his teeth, his teeth are gonna rot out of his head, or he's gonna get bleeding gums, and it's gonna lead to root canals and all kinds of other stuff, you know. And I just don't want that stuff to happen.

**Interviewer:** Absolutely. No one does, right. Not pleasant.

**Interviewee:** No, root canals are not pleasant.

**Interviewer:** Haven't had one, don't really want one.

**Interviewee:** Oh, I’ve had a few [**both laughing**].

**Interviewer:** Yeah. So thinking a little bit broadly -- we're towards our last part of the interview. As a caregiver, as a mom, as a parent of a child who has ASD, but also has some sensory sensitivities and some sensory interests, what does transitioning into adulthood mean to you?

**Interviewee:** [**36:00]** Independence and getting a job.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. Has this perspective changed over time?

**Interviewee:** Pardon?

**Interviewer:** Has this perspective changed over time?

**Interviewee:** My perspective of what I think it means to --

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh.

**Interviewee:** No.

**Interviewer:** Awesome. And then what do you see happening in your son's future?

**Interviewee:** Well, I certainly -- what do I see happening? Hopefully, at some point, a job.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. Absolutely.

**Interviewee:** Because everybody needs to make money to be able to live and pay bills. So hopefully, at some point, a job.

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh.

**Interviewee:** And learning how to pay bills and take care of a household.

**Interviewer:** Do you see him finishing school? Do you see him having --

**Interviewee:** Oh yeah, definitely. I foresee him finishing school. He just entered his junior year.

**Interviewer:** That's great.

**Interviewee:** And as far as academics, he's never had any trouble with academics. Like I said, he's very left brain. He remembers lots and lots of things. And he's one of those people that memorizes facts and dates and that kind of thing.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Interviewee:** So academics aren't a problem for him.

**Interviewer:** What is he studying in school now?

**Interviewee:** Right now, he declared a history major with a minor in poli sci.

**Interviewer:** That's great. That's applicable right now.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. Oh, he understands government more than [**trails off**]. It's really interesting how well he understands government and politics.

**Interviewer:** That’s awesome.

**Interviewee:** Because it's something that I totally hate. But he really understands it.

**Interviewer:** That's great. Do you see him having a family of sorts having a partner?

**Interviewee:** I hope so.

**Interviewer:** Absolutely. Do you see him moving out and living independently?

**Interviewee:** Unlikely. And that's only because he and I are the only two people that live in this house. So there really isn't a point for him to move out. And when the time comes, and I'm not here anymore, the house will be his. So there really isn't a point to moving out.

**Interviewer:** Absolutely. No, that makes total sense. And so I have one final question for you.

**Interviewee:** Okay.

**Interviewer:** Did your son's sensitivities impact this perspective that you've talked about in terms of gaining independence and having a job in terms of like what it means to transition to adulthood.

**Interviewee:** Does his sensory stuff impact that?

**Interviewer:** Yep.

**Interviewee:** I don't think so. I think that he can overcome all of those or at least have coping mechanisms to be able to deal with them. [**39:00]** I don't think those things are going to prevent him from transitioning into adulthood -- other things that he's going to have to overcome to get [**trails off**].

**Interviewer:** Like more of his social anxiety.

**Interviewee:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Gotcha. So that's all I have. Would you like to add anything else? You've been so helpful.

**Interviewee:** No.

**Interviewer:** Okay. Awesome. Well, this has been wonderful. Thank you for sharing your insight and for letting me learn about you and your family. It's been very helpful.

**Interviewee:** Oh, you're welcome.

**Interviewer:** Thank you. Do you know anyone else who might be interested in participating?

**Interviewee:** I don't know, but I could reach out to someone. One of the moms of one of the kids that he went to elementary school with, I'm still in touch with. So I could reach out to her.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Interviewee:** And if she says, okay, I’ll send her name along to you.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. That'd be lovely if you don't mind. And if she's comfortable with that, obviously if she's not, that's perfectly okay.

**Interviewee:** Okay.

**Interviewer:** Awesome. So this was so great. Thank you. I will send you a gift card shortly, but I will also include that information about job opportunities. And I know of a couple of other local agencies in like the Boston-ish area. So I’ll send those to you too.

**Interviewee:** That would really be great.

**Interviewer:** Hopefully, it helps or gives you ideas.

**Interviewee:** Okay.

**Interviewer:** Awesome. If you need anything else from me, please let me know. You know where to find me. Always reach out.

**Interviewee:** Okay. Ditto.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. Thank you. This has been lovely.

**Interviewee:** Thanks very much.

**Interviewer:** Bye.

**Interviewee:** Have a good day.

**Interviewer:** You too.

**[End of transcript]**