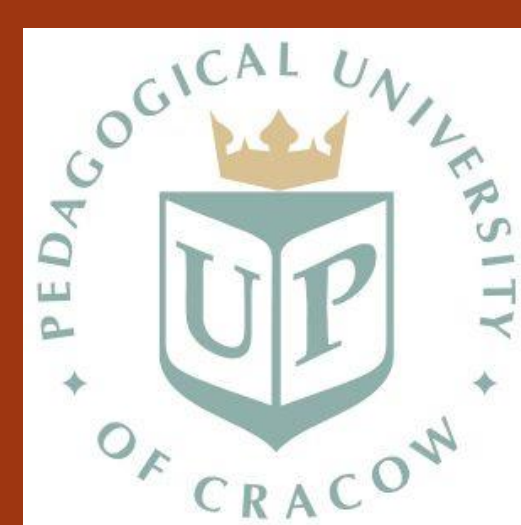


# Developmental tasks of adulthood in the context of the narrative of people with ASD

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## Introduction

In recent years, there has been a steady increase in the epidemiological indicators of autism (Graf, Miller, Epstein, Rapin, 2017; Pisula, 2015). ASD imply significant difficulties in the functioning of an adult. Adulthood of people with ASD, however, is a period rarely explored, especially from a subjective perspective. Therefore, the work will be dedicated to the analysis of autobiographical narratives of people with ASD in context of the occurrence of normative development tasks specified by Robert Havighurst characteristic of the period of adolescence and early adulthood. The presented material comes from literary works created by people with ASD: "The world needs different minds", and books: "If I could talk to you" written by Dietmar Zöller and "Behind the Wall: Personal Experience with Autism and Asperger Syndrome" written by Stephan Shor, which can serve as a direct source of information on experiences related to the implementation of typical adult developmental tasks.

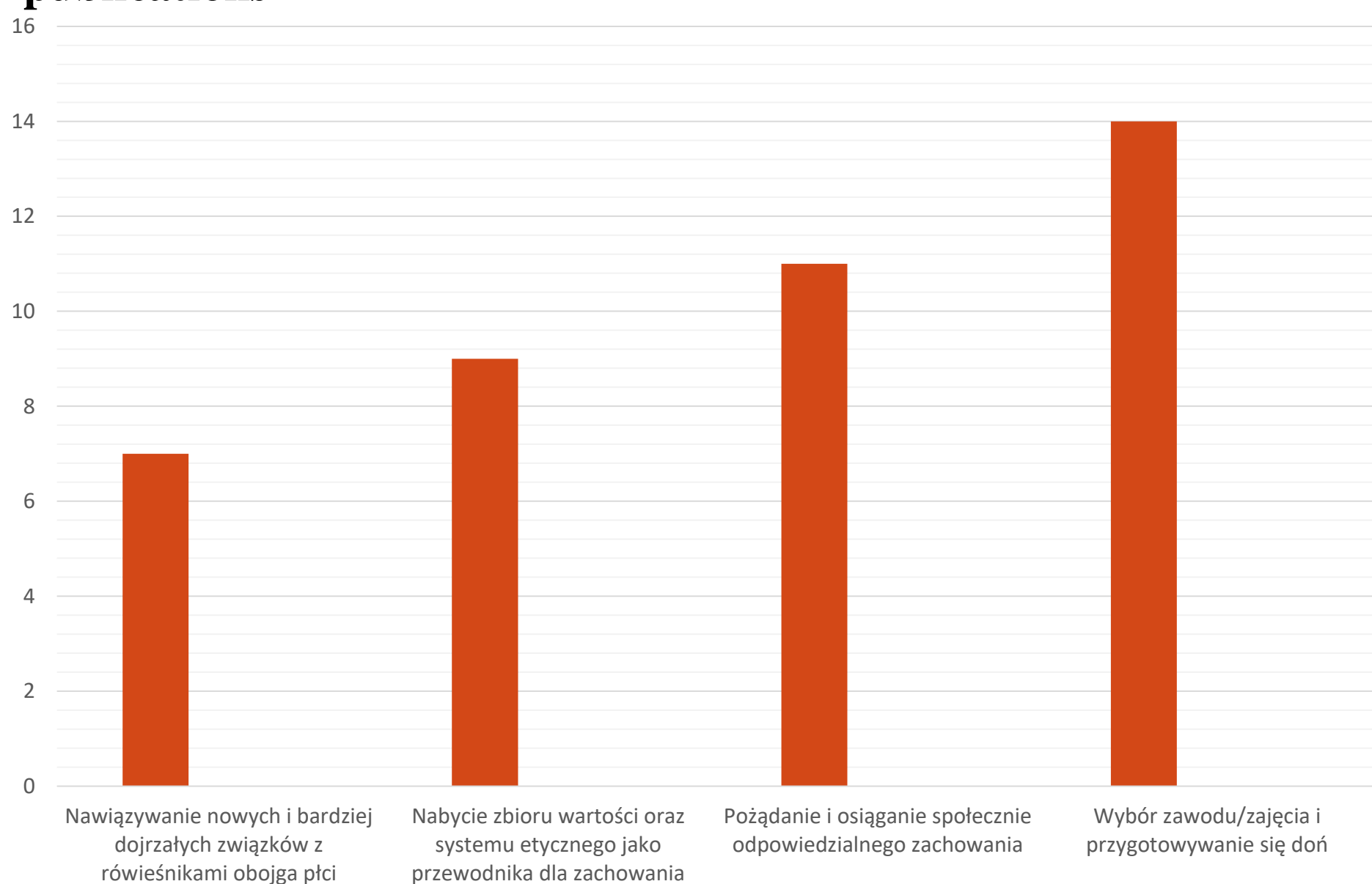
## Method

According to the theory of developmental tasks of Robert J. Havighurst, a list of categories and classification criteria was prepared, constituting normative developmental tasks characteristic for the period of adolescence and early adulthood, which are the basis for identifying and classifying the content of the analyzed publications. The listed literary items, whose material was classified by two independent judges, were subject to phenomenological analysis. A quantitative analysis of the categories found in literary texts was made, as well as a qualitative interpretation of the statements of the authors / heroes, testifying to the ways of experiencing and implementing separate development tasks.

## Results

The presented research shows that people with ASD are coping well with the implementation of development tasks. They overcome the same difficulties of this period as their neurotypical peers with no less success. They derive pleasure from building close relationships with other people as well as exploring the world and self-realization. It is worth noting the diversity of life paths chosen by the authors of the stories. The stereotypical perception of people with ASD by respondents in CBOS studies may result from the lack of an adequate level of knowledge about autism spectrum disorders and the lack of personal contact with them. We hope that there will be many more such speeches and publications promoting the image of people with ASD referring to their own thoughts, reflections and authentic biographies, which will help increase in awareness and knowledge in the field of autism spectrum disorders.

Chart 1. Tasks with the largest numbers, identified in the analyzed publications



## Conclusion

The presented analyzes of biographical literature allow for the formulation of several general conclusions. In the cited works, was disclosed developmental tasks important for the people with ASD. It seems reasonable to state that in adolescence and early adulthood people with autism spectrum disorders have the same needs and desires as non-autistic peers. They equally seek to meet the needs arising from the development phase in which they are currently. However, they need more support in achieving further milestones due to the difficulties they face due to the ASD deficits. This support within the framework of permanently implemented vocational and social rehabilitation should be comprehensive and continuous to maintain the competences acquired during school education and intensive therapy, and to develop the competences necessary for independent achievement of life goals both in professional and personal terms.

## Discussion

The limitation of the study is the fact that it is an attempt to present a subjective assessment of qualifications and early adulthood on the basis of an analysis of the literary work of people with ASD. When preparing a literary work, the author usually performs a full section of the content. For this reason, the analyzed narrative material may not fully reflect development experiences. For this reason, it seems necessary to continue the undertaken issue in empirical research with the use of a structured interview on a wider research group, taking into account a larger number of variables allowing for more precise conclusions and constructing a therapy focused on specific needs resulting, for example, from gender or age.

Table 1. Selected quotes reflecting developmental tasks specific to the period of adolescence and early adulthood

Development phase	Development task	Selected quotes
Early and late adolescence (12 - 18/22 years)	Establishing new and more mature relationships with peers of both sexes	- "Meets not only adults but also younger people." - "Get out of yourself" - "After being in the green school, I wrote to Uwe, with whom I lived in one room" - "If I could talk to you" - "My birthday was good. Uwe contributed to this. I've never had a friend before." - "If I could talk to you" - "I thought you stopped being my friend. But now all is well. (...) You often helped me. I can't help you. But I like you." - "If I could talk to you" - "Buddies, whom I also met at this camp, necessarily wanted us to be a couple." - "My friend Asperger" - "During our day trip, we and my friend discovered a steep beach with waves crashing on the shore." - "At work, I made friends with people from other countries." - "Behind the wall: personal experiences with autism and Asperger syndrome" - "Once upon a time, despite previous negative experiences, I even went to a bar with some of my roommates." - "Behind the wall: personal experiences with autism and Asperger syndrome"
	Mastering the gender-related social role	- "I have a long, tight dress. I like to wear such petticoats." - "Get out of yourself" - "Sometimes she asked if we could sleep together, which I agreed to."
	Accepting your own physicality and effectively using your own body	- "First, I'm a woman." - "Get out of yourself" - "I like to dress up. I also got a new corduroy jacket." - "If I could talk to you" - "She massaged my back, instead I massaged her." - "Behind the wall: personal experiences with autism and Asperger syndrome"
	Achieving emotional and economic independence	- "I take care of formalities for exchange to Finland." - "Get out of yourself" - "I work at the Autistic Aid Association." - "My friend Asperger" - "After graduating, I concentrated all my energy on looking for a job and a place where I could live." - "Behind the wall: personal experiences with autism and Asperger syndrome"
	Choosing a profession / class and getting ready for it	- "I'm starting college." - "Get out of yourself" - "I'd like to stay in school, but learn more." - "If I could talk to you" - "(...) I was behind in the AKAD program. I'm on my fourth serving. I am still doing well and receiving good grades." - "If I could talk to you" - "Science fills my life to such an extent that I don't know what boredom is" - "If I could talk to you" - "But I want to learn something because I'm not stupid. (...) Now I can show how smart I am again. I have an excellent memory." - "I got a place for internships" - "I do not cheat, I really can. I read and remember everything." - "But I am just capable and I remember everything. My mother underestimated it. Now she is terrified of what I have learned myself. Latin, French, physics, biology, atlas, sex, Third Reich, autism according to Battelheim. I read like Satan. he had no idea. It was revenge for wanting to educate me only in practice." - "If I could talk to you" - "I finished my essay. This is something I feel good about." - "If I could talk to you" - "I really take part in the extramural AKAD course" - "If I could talk to you" - "I will read the AKAD brochures myself. I have already read the biology." - "If I could talk to you" - "I've finished algebra." - "I am a grateful AKAD student" - "If I could talk to you" - "During the bachelor's degree, I studied two fields at the same time." - "Behind the wall: personal experiences with autism and Asperger syndrome"
	Preparing for marriage and family life	- "In the meantime, I fell into a two-year relationship." - "Get out of yourself" - "I cooked soup with my mother. I decided the ingredients. It was quite fun." - "If I could talk to you" - "I think men should also help at home." - "If I could talk to you" - "One summer through a friend I met a woman who began to spend more and more time with me" - "Behind the wall: personal experiences with autism and Asperger syndrome" - "Soon after, I spent a lot of time with my friend who lived in the same dorm." - "Behind the wall: personal experiences with autism and Asperger syndrome"
	Developing intellectual skills and concepts necessary for civic competence	- "Some time later I get an invitation to the conference." - "Get out of yourself" - "I just came back with my mother from the election. If I could vote, I would vote for greens. I think it is right that they are protesting against the waste incineration plant. People should stop producing so much rubbish." - "If I could talk to you" - "During my travels around the country with speeches on the autism spectrum, I was encouraged to apply for the position of board member of the Autism Society of America." - "Behind the wall: personal experiences with autism and Asperger syndrome" - "After careful consideration of the proposal and gentle encouragement and support from friends like Nancy Cale and Jerry Silbert, I decided to run." - "Behind the wall: personal experiences with autism and Asperger syndrome"
	Desire and achieve socially responsible behavior	- "Conservatism as a panacea" - "Get out of yourself" - "The will to learn arose from my aggression, because it is power." - "If I could talk to you" - "I can't talk, I had to adapt." - "If I could talk to you" - "When I was little, I couldn't learn anything by myself. I lacked motivation. But now I want to learn." - "If I could talk to you" - "But I know I have to learn to organize my time." - "If I could talk to you" - "My fear of any change is inadequate, but somehow I deal with it." - "If I could talk to you" - "How can I live a carefree life if I can't do anything that people accept." - "If I could talk to you" - "But I want to help autistic children. I was also helped so that I understand everything now." - "If I could talk to you" - "I have belonged to the Autistic Aid Association since June." - "My friend Asperger" - "Although I still worked, there was a big change in my attitude towards my current job." - "Behind the wall: personal experiences with autism and Asperger syndrome" - "It wasn't until around thirty-five that I learned how words can potentially have an emotional impact." - "Behind the wall: personal experiences with autism and Asperger syndrome"
	Acquisition of a set of values and an ethical system as a guide for behavior	- "It's worth believing, sometimes give up, but always fight on." - "Get out of yourself" - "I couldn't shoot. I can't imagine my enemies and I won't let myself be convinced." - "If I could talk to you" - "But I'm glad it works with me. I can appreciate it." - "If I could talk to you" - "Why spend money? So many people in the world are starving. It doesn't leave me alone." - "If I could talk to you" - "I love my mother too much. I learned something out of love for her." - "If I could talk to you" - "I'm not telling myself anything, I'm slowly becoming a realist." - "If I could talk to you" - "I'm worried about you because you are sick." - "If I could talk to you" - "I was very concerned about cheating and getting caught up in such a complicated situation." - "My friend Asperger" - "For me, many things are simply not rated as positive or negative. I even wonder why others spend so much energy assessing whether someone is good, bad, beautiful or ugly." - "Behind the wall: personal experiences with autism and Asperger syndrome"
	Wczesna dorosłość (23 - 34 lata)	Choosing a life partner
Learning to live with a partner		- "We talked more and more about life, our interests and views." - "My friend Asperger"
Start in family roles		- "One of these visions is this, I start a family." - "My friend Asperger" - "After another eighteen months of engagement, we got married." - "Behind the wall: personal experiences with autism and Asperger syndrome"
Childcare		-
Home management		- "I currently live in a farmhouse." - "My friend Asperger" - "We cooked together." - "Behind the wall: personal experiences with autism and Asperger syndrome"
Start in a professional career		- "At the job interview I felt a lot of stress and nervousness" - "My friend Asperger" - "After completing a bachelor's degree in music education, accounting and information systems, I started working at a medium-sized accounting company." - "Behind the Wall: Personal Experience with Autism and Asperger Syndrome" - "I took my first job as a lecturer at the American Business Institute." - "Behind the wall: personal experiences with autism and Asperger syndrome" - "When I got a job as a professor of music and computer science in 1994, I knew I had found my niche." - "Behind the wall: personal experiences with autism and Asperger syndrome"
Taking responsibility as a citizen		-
Finding the right social group		- "That's how I met the president of the foundation and a few volunteers." - "Get out of yourself" - "I moved to the orchestra with my trumpet and since then I play in various bands." - "Behind the wall: personal experiences with autism and Asperger syndrome" - "We meet fairly regularly, enjoy our common interests in airplanes, and discuss the effects of autistic spectrum manifestations." - "Behind the wall: personal experiences with autism and Asperger syndrome"

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