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Introduction to Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

This webinar will focus on individuals with ASD who have average to above average cognition and verbal skills.



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Success is the result of perfection, hard work, learning from failure, loyalty, and persistence.
Colin Powell

✓ **The Best Lessons...**

As a teacher I learned the best lessons from my students..., I continue to learn from amazing individuals with autism and outstanding colleagues and professionals.

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Objectives

- Participants will gain information about characteristics and differences specific to individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD)
- Participants will gain information on supports for individuals with ASD to increase meaningful participation and success in a variety of settings
- Participants will gain information about evidence based practices that can support individuals with an ASD



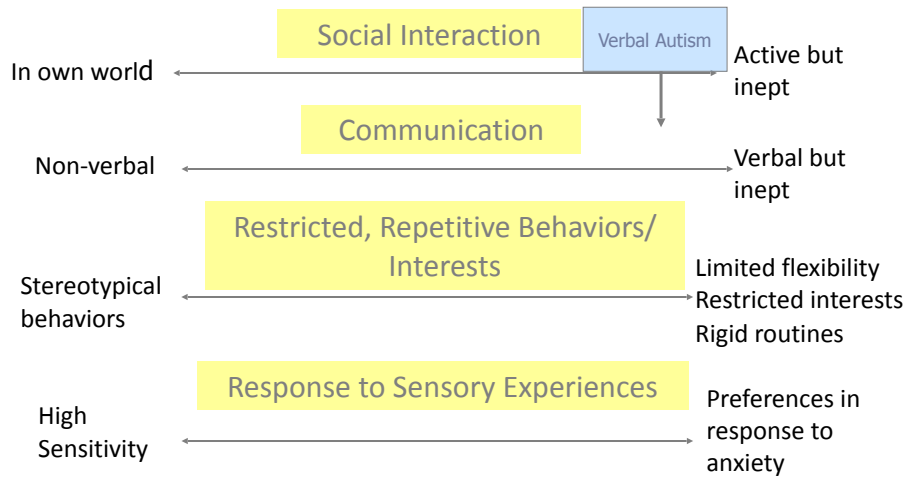
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SO..... WHAT EXACTLY IS AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER?

“Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a developmental disability that can cause significant social, communication and behavioral challenges.”

Center for Disease Control and Prevention website: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/facts.html>

Autism Spectrum Disorders



Triad of Characteristics



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Communication

- Typical development of language
- May be very literal
- Expressive and receptive language levels may not match
- Trouble reading non-verbal communication, such as facial expressions, body language, or body space
- Difficulty understanding that other people may have a different perspective

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Social Characteristics

- Difficulty understanding social “rules” and relationships.
- Difficulty with spontaneously sharing experiences.
- Lack of social reciprocity
- Unconventional/Inappropriate methods of interaction.
- Inconsistent use of non-verbal behavior



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Restricted Patterns of Behavior, Interests, and Activities

- Need for sameness
- Routines and rituals
- Narrow areas of interest
- Anxiety
- Repetitive motor behaviors



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Sensory Differences

- Sensory Differences in:
 - Seeing
 - Hearing
 - Smelling
 - Tasting;
 - Touching
 - Body position and balance (proprioception)
 - Movement (vestibular)



**Temple Grandin on the topic of sensory issues...http://youtube.com/watch?v=zzf80k5b_EM*

Cognitive Differences

- Rote memory
- Academic levels
- Problem solving skills
- Generalization
- Executive functioning
- Special interests



Motor Differences

- Poor handwriting skills
- Awkward gait
- Athletic skills deficits
- Unusual body postures, movements or
- Facial expressions



Emotional Vulnerability

- Difficulty identifying and understanding feelings
- Trouble reading emotional situations
- Co-morbid mental health issues
- Anxiety/depression
- Rages/aggression



Features That Directly Impact Learning

- Attention difficulties
- Communication impairments
- Lack of social skills understanding
- Auditory processing impairments
- Generalization of skills
- Difficulties imitating behavior
- Behavioral issues
- Trouble with task/event sequencing
- Transitions and time concepts



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A few of the strengths of individuals with autism...

- Strong visual performance skills
- Ability to learn and follow routines
- Focused attention related to special interests
- Rote Memory
- Honest



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How Do We Support Individuals with ASD at Home, School and in the Community?



Social Supports



Research says...

Individuals with “soft skills” such as good social skills, sociability, good work habits, and conscientiousness, as well as those who participate in extra curricular activities are more likely to make more money, be employed, and attain high levels of education than those with good grades and high standardized test scores

(Lleras, 2008)

Social Skills Instruction

There is no one method to teach social skills that works for all students all the time. However, evidence shows that many approaches can be effective.

Scott Bellini

Individuals with autism need direct teaching of social skills. There are many curriculums and programs available to teach:

- Social Skills Instruction
- Social Thinking (Michelle Garcia Winner)
- Teaching of Executive Functioning Skills

Social Narratives/Stories

- Can be words alone or words accompanied by pictures dependent on the individual's need.
- Can be used to prepare for a novel event or to support better coping in a situation in which an individual has had difficulty.
- Length and complexity is dependent on the individual for whom the story is written

Social Story™ Example

My name is Jacob. I am in the second grade. Sometimes the children in my class stand in a line. The children in my class stand in a line when we are getting ready to go to another part of the school like the lunchroom or the library.

The children in my class walk in a line to move safely in the halls. If another group of students are walking in the hall going in a different direction, our class and their class can pass one another easily. That's why teachers have asked children to walk in lines for many years. It is a safe and orderly way to move groups of children through the school building.

Sometimes I am the line leader. This means that the other children in my class will walk behind me. Sometimes I am second, or third, or last, or maybe I'm somewhere in the middle of the line.

Many children in my class like to be the line leader. My teacher knows who the line leader is each day. Teachers know about being fair and try to make sure each child gets a turn to be the line leader. It's important to follow directions about who is line leader. My turn to be line leader again gets closer every time the children in my class walk in a line!

Adapted from The Gray Center, <http://www.thegraycenter.org>.

Teach the Hidden Curriculum

“The hidden curriculum refers to the set of rules or guidelines that are often not directly taught but are assumed to be known (Garnett, 1984; Hemmings, 2000; Jackson, 1968; Kanpol, 1989) The hidden curriculum contains items that impact social interactions, school performance, and sometimes safety.”

Myles, 2004

Teach Critical Friendship Skills

- Imitation
- Give and Take (Reciprocity)
- Perspective Taking
- Opportunities
- Verbal/Nonverbal Communication
- Ability to problem solve simple conflicts with peers

Address and Prevent Bullying

- Spoken word
- Written word
- Technological messages
- Physical acts
- Single person/group



New Study shows that children with ASD are bullied at a very high rate, and are also often intentionally “triggered” into meltdowns or aggressive outbursts by ill-intentioned peers.

The study found that a total of 63% of 1,167 children with ASD, ages 6 to 15, had been bullied at some point in their lives.

Bullying Supports

- Help the individual find a safe person to talk to about bullying situations
- Use social supports, like role playing, video modeling, social stories, and cartooning to teach about bullying
- Build the self-esteem of the individual
- Be aware of supervision in social situations
- Individualize bullying instruction to what each child needs to learn

Great list of resources to Prevent Bullying: <http://www.autismspeaks.org/family-services/bullying>

Myles, et al, 2004; Gray, 2004

Effective Teaching Strategies for students with autism



Motivation and ASD

Although individuals with Asperger Syndrome and autism appear to have low motivation, the truth is that they often have a different type of motivation (Baker, 2000; Dunlap, 1995).

Until staff and parents find out what the motivator is, it is difficult to prompt the individual to complete work and related tasks.

Reinforcement

90% of the Effectiveness of a Program
is REINFORCEMENT!

No Reinforcer – No Lesson!

What does Research Say about the Effectiveness of Reinforcement?

RESEARCH TABLE

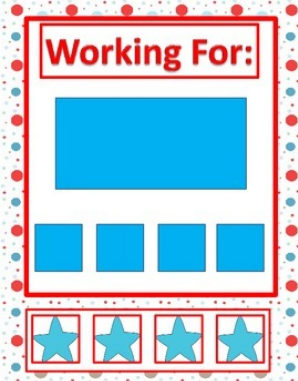
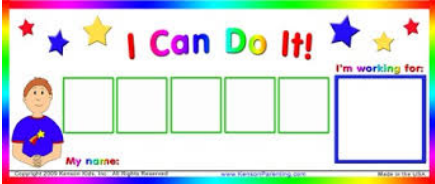
Number of Studies	Ages (year)	Sample Size	Area(s) Addressed	Outcome
79	3 to adult	214	Communication, self-management, social skills/interaction, behavior management, symbol comprehension/expression, communication/speech, food consumption, leisure education, academic, work-related behaviors, play skills, stereotypic behavior	+

STEPS For using Reinforcement

The following steps are used in reinforcement:

1. Identify a desired behavior. Choose an observable and measurable behavior.
2. Select an effective reinforcer. Choose a reinforcer or reinforcers by observation, interview, or completing a reinforcer checklist.
3. Administer reinforcer contingent upon the desired behavior. Give the reinforcer on a predetermined schedule after the desired behavior occurs.

Visual Supports for Reinforcement



What is the Paycheck?



Reinforcement Example

Token boards can be made with as little as one token. Increase the number of tokens with the success of the student comprehending the concept.



Token Board
Concept, with
10 tokens to
earn

” T h e w a y p o s i t i v e
r e i n f o r c e m e n t i s
c a r r i e d o u t i s m o r e
i m p o r t a n t t h a n t h e
a m o u n t . ”

B.F. Skinner

Emotional/Behavior Supports

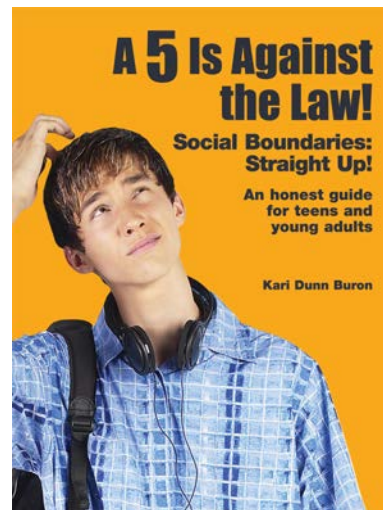


Teach Self-Calming/Self-Regulation

- Individuals with autism often cannot tell when they are becoming upset or overly excited
- Individuals with autism often don't know how to self-calm

Rating	Description	Setting
5	Screaming	Emergency only
4	Outside voice	Recess, ball game
3	Talking voice	Classroom, lunchroom
2	Soft voice/whisper	Library
1	No talking	When someone is talking to me, movies

Buron, K.D., & Curtis, M. (2003). *The Incredible 5-Point Scale*. Shawnee Mission, KS: AAPC.



Social Autopsy Worksheet - School

What happened?

I yelled at the teacher because she asked me to correct grammar mistakes in the paragraph I turned in for homework.

What was the social error? Who was hurt by the social error?

Yelling at the teacher.

What should be done to correct the error?

Apologize. Explain to my teacher that I worked very hard on my homework. I am not good at grammar and it frustrates me when I don't do well.

What should be done next time?

I can take 3 deep breaths when the teacher first asks me to redo an assignment. I can ask if I can get help from someone to correct the mistakes.

Social Autopsy Worksheet

What happened?
What was the social error? Who was hurt by the social error?
What should be done to correct the error?
What should be done next time?

Adapted from Lavoie, 1994

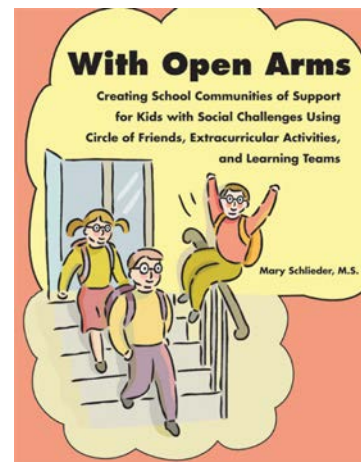
Trained Social Peer Group (Circle of Friends)

Develop circle of friends with chosen peers

Define new skill for student (i.e. topic maintenance, giving compliment)

Demonstrate how peers can encourage and demonstrate social skills through group meetings

Generalize skills throughout day





Academic/Work Supports

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“ F A I R N E S S I S N O T
G I V I N G E V E R Y O N E
T H E S A M E T H I N G .
F A I R N E S S I S G I V I N G
T H E I N D I V I D U A L
W H A T T H E Y N E E D T O
S U C C E E D . ”

Richard D. Lavoie

Priming

An intervention that previews activities with which the youth is likely to have difficulties

- Conducted prior to an activity using actual materials
- To create predictability
- Not instruction

Can occur:

- At home for the next day
- The morning of...in school
- At the end of the school day for the next day

Visual Supports

- Not readily noticeable (age appropriate)
- Easily accessible



Handwriting Modifications

- Explain and advocate the need for handwriting modifications
- Have the student underline, circle or highlight answers to questions in a text instead of writing responses
- Teach the student to use a laptop, PDA, or app etc. to complete written work
- Enlist a peer or provide a para to complete note-taking or writing or provide copies of notes

Organizational Supports

- To-do lists
- Timelines / calendars
- Color coded folders
 - Matched with color-coded books
 - Pens/pencils in each
- Multi-compartment back-pack
- Two back-packs, if on block schedule

Teach Routines

- How to ask for help
- How and when to sharpen pencils
- How to ask to go to the bathroom
- When/how to hand in homework
- How to organize materials
- How to make up missed work
- How to line up
- How to get ready to go home

*** If the student doesn't understand it – teach it!*



The Bottom Line...

- There is NO secret recipe!
- There is no “Quick fix” or “band aid” for students with ASD
- Individualize...some of the strategies discussed may be exactly what one student needs and not what another student needs!



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<http://www.unl.edu/asdnetwork/>