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Northern Institute for Organizational Capacity
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An Introduction to Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)


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Activity

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Learning Objectives

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- ♦ list the characteristics that define Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)
- ♦ understand other common characteristics
- ♦ describe strategies that have been proven successful with individuals with ASD



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DSM-IV TR
Pervasive Developmental Disorders

Autism Spectrum Disorders
PDD-NOS
Asperger's Syndrome
Autistic Disorder

Rett's Syndrome
Childhood Disintegrative Disorder



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PDD Canadian Prevalence Rates

2003

- ◆ Total: 40 in 10,000 Canadians (1:250)
 - CDD Rare: 0.2 in 10,000= 500 Canadians
 - Rett's Rare: 1 in 10,000= 3,150 Canadians
 - Autistic Disorder: 20 in 10,000= 73,000 Canadians
 - PDD-NOS: 15 in 10,000= 47,000 Canadians
 - Asperger's: 5 in 10,000= 15,000 Canadians


2006

- ◆ Total: 60 in 10,000 Canadians (1:165)

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Autism Information

- ◆ Gender ratio
 - Autism 4 (boys):1(girl)
 - Asperger's 5:1 – 15:1
- ◆ Life Long
- ◆ Unrelated to social, economic, or cultural history



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Causes and Cures*


- ◆ Genetic factors
- ◆ Environmental factors
- ◆ NOT caused by parenting skills/techniques

* No known “cure” but there are effective treatments

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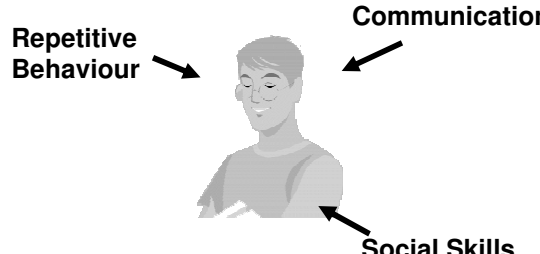
Diagnosis

- ◆ Made by professional such as psychologist, psychological associate, pediatrician
- ◆ Interviews, observational measures
- ◆ Based on DSM-IV



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Triad of Impairments



Repetitive Behaviour


Communication

Social Skills




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Spectrum



Severe Moderate Mild



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Communication – Classic Autism

- ◆ Delay in acquisition or lack of language
- ◆ Impairment in ability to initiate or sustain conversation
- ◆ Stereotyped or repetitive language
- ◆ Lack of pretend or imitative play*

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Communication – Asperger's

- ◆ No clinically significant language delay
- ◆ Occasionally well developed expressive language

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Communication

- ◆ Flat or monotone speech
- ◆ Difficulty with prosody of speech
- ◆ Difficulty with tone and volume
- ◆ Literal interpretations

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Prosody

I didn't steal the apple.
 I *didn't* steal the apple.
 I didn't *steal* the apple.
 I didn't steal *the* apple.
 I didn't steal the *apple*.


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Social Skills

- ◆ Skill deficit
- ◆ Performance deficit
- ◆ Self-Control deficit


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Social Skill Specifics

- ◆ Difficulty developing and maintaining peer relationships
- ◆ Not use/understand facial expression, body language or eye gaze in interactions
- ◆ May prefer to be alone, use people as 'tools' and not share enjoyment


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Hidden Curriculum

- ◆ The untaught set of rule/guidelines that govern our social behaviour (common sense)
- ◆ Is vast, complex and elusive: includes 'grey areas'
- ◆ Differs across gender, age, culture, and immediate social group



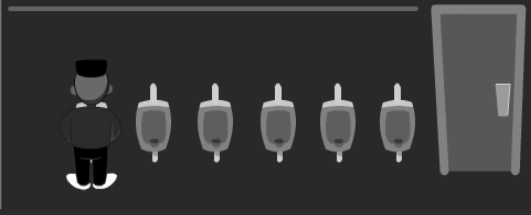
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Urinal Game

Problem 1

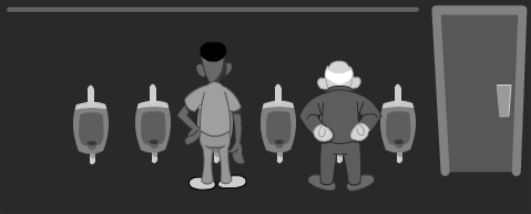
Urinal One is occupied. Select the correct urinal for you to use. [Click](#) on your choice.



Urinal Game

Problem 2

In this situation urinals three and five are occupied. Which is the correct urinal for you to use? [Click](#) on your choice.



Urinal Game

Problem 3 Let's see how well you do in this situation.
Click on your choice.

Urinal Game

Problem 4 This situation is a little easier.
Click on your choice.

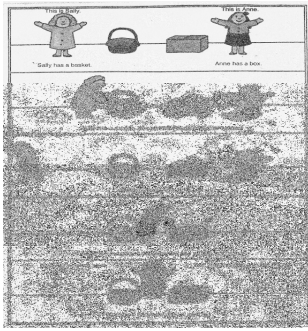
Theory of Mind

- ◆ Ability to perceive and understand what someone may be thinking or feeling and the ability to reflect on one's own thoughts

Attwood, 2005

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Sally and Ann



Baron-Cohen, 1995



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Shared Attention

- ◆ UCLA research, 1980's Dr. Marian Sigman
- ◆ Similar heart rate response
- ◆ Not show typical response



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Differences in the Brain

- ◆ Frontal lobe connections
- ◆ Amygdala size and response
- ◆ Implications



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Behaviour: Restricted, repetitive

- ◆ Insistent on specific non-functional patterns of behaviour
- ◆ Strong preoccupation with an area of special interest
- ◆ Stereotyped and repetitive movements

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Gestalt Learners



- ◆ Learn in pieces
- ◆ Leads to
- ◆ Leads to

han small
| skills
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Sensory Issues

- ◆ High percentage of individuals with ASD have sensory issues
- ◆ They will seek or avoid certain types of sensory input
- ◆ Five senses + proprioception + vestibular

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Anxiety

- ♦ Fear in the absence of real danger
- ♦ Worry about what MAY happen / a future event
- ♦ **Anxiety = stress is present**
- ♦ Can be diagnosed separately from ASD - 30 % or more develop anxiety disorders at some time in their life

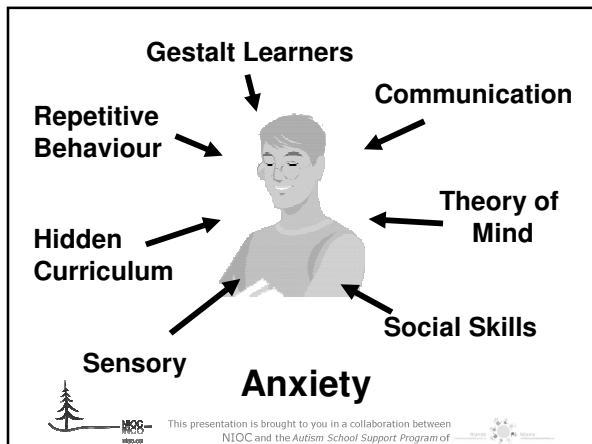
Dr. Peter Szatmari, 2005

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Common Traits

- ♦ Visual thinkers/learners
- ♦ Literal minds
- ♦ Attention difficulties
- ♦ Black and White thinkers
- ♦ “Special” abilities

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Break



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“Welcome to My Life”


- ◆ What every student with ASD wishes you knew:
 - I am first and foremost a person
 - My sensory perceptions are distorted
 - Distinguish between “won’t” and “can’t”
 - I am a concrete thinker. I interpret language literally
 - Be patient with my limited vocabulary



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“Welcome to My Life”

- Because language is so difficult for me, I am very visually oriented
- Focus and build on what I can do rather than what I can’t do
- Help me with social interactions
- Identify what triggers my meltdowns
- Learning is circular
- We are a team




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“Welcome to My Life”

- I think differently
- Behaviour is communication: yours, mine and ours
- If we can't communicate effectively, learning can't happen
- Teach the whole me

adapted from E. Notbohm, Ten Things Every Child With Autism Wishes You Knew and Ten Things Every Student With Autism Wishes You Knew (2005 & 2006), Future Horizons, www.FHautism.com


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Welcome To My Life

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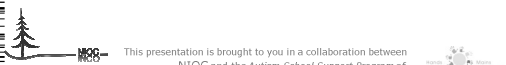
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So...

What do I do?

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A Place to Begin

1. Use Visuals
2. Add Structure
3. Address sensory, anxiety and social challenges



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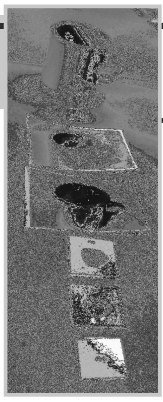


Visuals



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- ♦ concrete objects
- ♦ miniature objects
- ♦ coloured or digital photographs
- ♦ black and white photographs
- ♦ coloured picture symbols
- ♦ black and white picture symbols
- ♦ written word



Why Use Visual Supports

- ◆ Help reduce levels of frustration and anxiety
- ◆ Clarify expectations, instructions and information
- ◆ Increase independence
- ◆ Can minimize arguments and “back and forth” patterns


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Visual Supports: Important Elements



- Concrete, consistent and clear
- Simple
- User-friendly – Individualized
 - May use high-interest element

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Remember...



Visual aids are valuable to EVERYONE

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Checklists (aka chunking)

- ◆ Break down steps necessary to complete the activity
- ◆ Allow the individual to “see” the entire sequence
- ◆ Help the individual complete an activity one step at a time (reduces anxiety)



MSGS

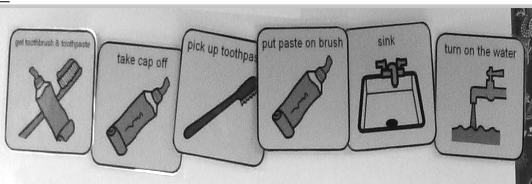
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Checklists (aka task analysis)

- ◆ Teach the connection from one step to the other
- ◆ Inform the individual when they have finished
 - How much is expected?
- ◆ Make it for an entire group

Daily Living Skills








MSGS

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Leisure Time

Get a book 	Look at book 	When done find another book 	Look at book 	Keep doing this until you hear the tambourine 
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Teaching Visual Supports

Make materials together

Put visual aid into the environment together

Taught to use visual aid independently



Independence

Individual completes task

Individual refers to visual

Teach How To Use Visual Supports



- ◆ Make sure the visual supports are available and purposeful
- ◆ Talk less and refer to the visual information
- ◆ Teach the individual to be responsible for the visual support

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Teach How To Use Visual Supports



- ◆ Review the information as part of the routine and before an activity
- ◆ Resist the temptation to “get rid of” the visual support because you “think” they don’t need it anymore

Would you give up your visual supports?



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Visuals as Expressive Communication

- ◆ Reduce frustration of unclear communication
- ◆ Not have to find the right words
- ◆ Builds understanding of language and social communication



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Structure

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Environmental Structure

- ◆ Every activity/object has its place
- ◆ Use visual labels
- ◆ Minimize unnecessary items and items in view

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Create Structure

- ◆ Identify unstructured times (leisure times, coffee breaks, lineups, etc.)
- ◆ Provide guidance to entire group about expectations and roles during these times (when possible)
- ◆ Use options, scripts and visuals

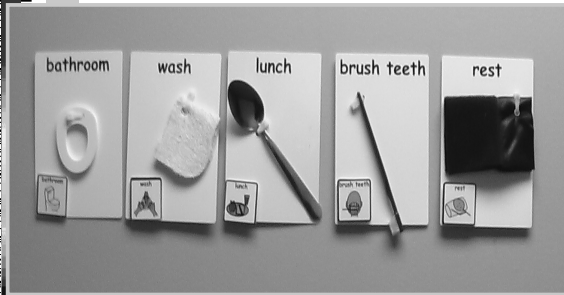
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Temporal Structure

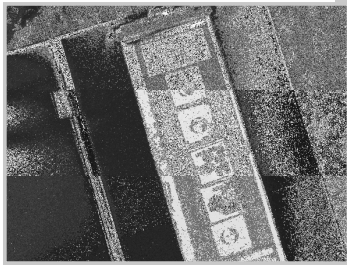
- ◆ Provide daily schedule at appropriate developmental level
- ◆ Keep consistency
 - Clearly show any changes
- ◆ Teach/show temporal and sequencing concepts



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Object Schedule





Picture Schedule



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Visual Schedule With Words



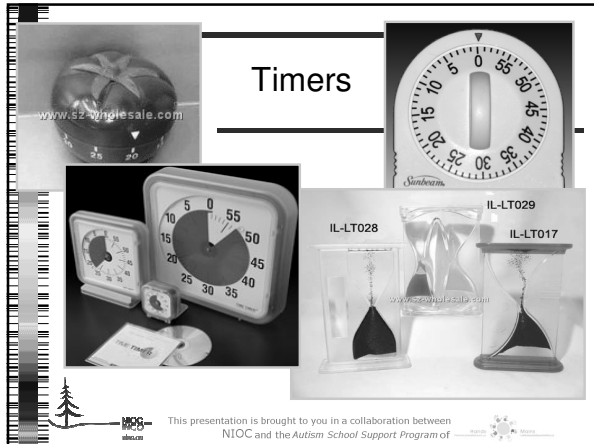
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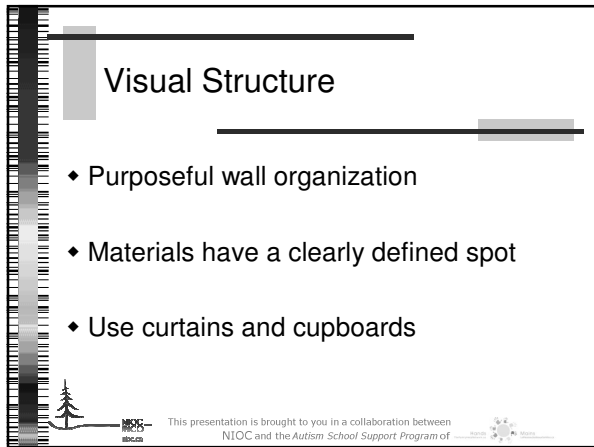
Visual Calendar

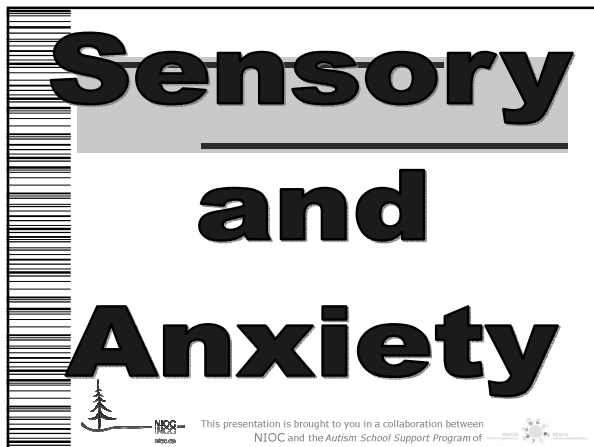
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November 2001

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 9:30 AM peer mtg shelly garbage question timesheet	2 mtg - vinnie - PVF am	3
4	5	6	7 laura off garbage timesheet	8 laura off	9	10
11 Remembrance Day Veteran's Day	12	13 3:00 PM peer awd	14 garbage timesheet	15 laura half-day vac	16	17
18 laura half day 7:15 PM laura conf vac	19 laura half day vac	20 laura half day vac	21 Thanksgiving garbage holiday timesheet	22 holiday parents	23	24
25	26 9:00 PM conf call - many	27	28 2:00 PM AM mtg 1D1132 garbage timesheet	29 12:00 PM linda lunch garbage	30	
31 Fall Practice what are we doing? check system? classes? garbage timesheet						Fall Practice laura pending







Sensory: Prevention

- ◆ Pay attention to sensory stimuli in the environment
- ◆ Control stimulation levels
- ◆ Fidget items


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Sensory Diet

- ◆ Sensory integration theory
- ◆ Based on OT Sensory Assessment
- ◆ Provides input to individual before they seek to fill it in inappropriate ways

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Typical Environment




➤ Cleaners	➤ Fans
➤ Paints	➤ People talking
➤ Food	➤ Lines
➤ Perfume	➤ Fluorescent lights
➤ Deodorants	➤ New clothes
➤ Aquariums	➤ Television/Radio
➤ PA system	➤ Voice tones
➤ Fire alarm	➤ Weather

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Anxiety: Relaxation Diet


- ◆ Build in down time / quiet area
- ◆ Teach relaxation strategies
- ◆ Allow access to calming activities **BEFORE** the anxiety level increases



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Anxiety: Prevention


- ◆ Prepare for transitions and changes
- ◆ Become aware of increasing anxiety signs
- ◆ Prompt relaxation
 - Individual and group



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Anxiety: Teach Self-Advocacy

- ◆ Recognition of emotions and increasing anxiety (how do I look, how do I feel)
- ◆ Recognition of anxiety provoking situations (what makes me feel this way)
- ◆ Self-directed relaxation (what do I do to calm down)





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Social Skills



Address Social Skills

- ◆ Define and teach specific skills (age, gender and referent group specific)
- ◆ Use modeling to show the skill
- ◆ Use inclusive language

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Address Social Skills

- ◆ Create “social” opportunities
- ◆ Develop Social Stories™, Scripts, Power Cards to help social understanding
- ◆ Practice groups

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Thanks

Questions

