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Communicating Through Behavior

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Is it the autism or just bad behavior?

- Children with autism are:
  Children who happen to have autism

- They each have individual personalities and experiences that motivate their behavior

- <u>However</u>….they can't turn off their autism

  There are usually some underlying characteristics of autism that drive behavior

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Underlying issues in Children with Disorders: **Autism Spectrum**

Tantrums	Repetitive Actions
Refusals	Unusual behaviors
Aloofness	Echolalia
Rigidity	Poor eye contact

Difficulty in:

- Emotion sharing
- Social referencing
- Co-regulation
- Functional Communication
- Sensory processing
- Auditory Comprehension

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Underlying issues

Emotion sharing

- Infants begin sharing joy through face to face gazing

- Later we learn that others perceive events differently than we do. We not only talk about what we see, we also share emotion, unique perspectives and imagination. We learn to take their perspective (mind reading)

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Underlying issues

Social Referencing

- Social referencing emerges when children are about 12 months old.

- Children begin to observe expressions of worry, happiness, disapproval on their parent's faces.

- By 18 months, children typically begin to use the emotions they observe as guides to what to do next.

- From that point on, social referencing grows. It becomes the foundation for understanding how our own behaviors impact others' feelings. It helps us learn the boundaries of appropriate behavior.

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Underlying issues

Co-regulation

- Co-regulation requires constant referencing. It begins developing in layers from early infancy.

- A child monitors his partner in play and communication. He decides what he needs to do to repair and maintain conversations. "Should I slow down, change topic etc.

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Functional communication

Underlying issues

- Functional communication skills are forms of behavior that express needs, wants, feelings, and preferences that others can understand.

- For communications to be functional, it needs to be <u>understandable</u> , <u>directed toward a person</u> and <u>appropriate.</u>

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SENSORY PROCESSING

Underlying issues

The inability to properly perceive and interpret sensory information through the senses that affects daily functioning.

Underlying issues

AUDITORY COMPREHENSION

Visual is a typically a strength compared to auditory learning.
Visual information is static
Auditory information is here and then it is gone

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The link between communication and behavior

Behavior is a form of communication

- When individuals learn functional communication skills, they are able to express themselves without resorting to problem behavior or experiencing communication breakdown.
(National Joint Committee for the Communication Needs of Persons with Severe Disabilities, asha.org)

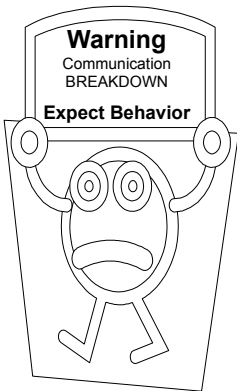KANSAS INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT NETWORK

Breakdowns in communication occur when:

- There is not a consistent and functional form of communication.
- Rules of their environment are not understood.
- Students don't process auditory information well.
- Social cues are misinterpreted.
- Students don't know how or when to ask for help.
- Students are too literal.

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What does this look like in the classroom setting?

- inconsistent performance
- stubborn or manipulative
- lack independence
- inattentive
- unable to handle change
- don't hand in assignments on time
- "Just don't fit in"

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Warning
Communication
BREAKDOWN
Expect Behavior

We often assume that students understand more than what they actually do.

A large vocabulary is not a reliable indicator that a student is comprehending and organizing auditory information.

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Examples of communicative behaviors

How many of these behaviors would you consider functional?	
• Understood by the communicative partner	• Talking
	• Giving an object or picture
• Directed	• Gestures/signs
	• Crying/screaming
• Appropriate	• Hitting
If it is not functional could we shape the behavior?	• Pushing/pulling
	• Looking
	• Reaching
	• Pointing

- Talking
- Giving an object or picture
- Gestures/signs
- Crying/screaming
- Hitting
- Pushing/pulling
- Looking
- Reaching
- Pointing
- Touching
- Kicking
- Showing
- Leaving/running
- sleeping
- Self injurious behaviors
- Facial expressions
- Many more….

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Building links to repair breakdowns

- **Assess the situation**
- **Develop strategies**
- **Teach use of strategies and supports to the student and staff.**
- **Implement strategies and supports across all environments**

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Assessing the Situation

UH... IT'S A LITTLE HARD TO TELL. BUT... YES! YES. THE CHECK ENGINE LIGHT IS ON!

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- The Ziggurat Model-
  In depth look at underlying causes of behavior and then at appropriate interventions.   Ruth Aspy Ph.D, Barry Grossman, Ph.D   www.texasautism.com
- Functional Behavior Assessment
- Data collection
- Linda Hodgdon's Guide for Assessing Behavior Situations

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What is the behavior telling me?…

Motivation

Sensory	Escape
Attention	Wants

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BEHAVIOR MOTIVATION CHECK

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Developing Strategies

What type of changes are needed?
- Changes in the environment? (How does the student handle the environment?)
- Changes in student performance? (How does the student manage specific tasks or routines?)
- What communication interactions need support?
- Do the current supports achieve the intended goal?
- Do the these supports allow for maximum independence?

From Linda Hodgdon's Guide for Planning Communication Tools

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Students using visual strategies, such as schedules, know what is expected of them and what will happen next.

They are better able to accept change and anxiety is reduced.

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The 5 Point Scale

The 5 Point Scale was developed by Kari Dunn-Buron to help students learn to recognize their "state of being" and engage in appropriate strategies to adjust it.

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What does the scale look like?

It should always be individualized, however, I like this example!

Name: David   My Scared/Afraid/Trembling   Scale

Reprinted with permission from Buron, K., & Curtis, M. (2003). The Incredible 5-Point Scale: Assisting students with Autism Spectrum Disorders in understanding social interactions and controlling their emotional responses (pp. 1-3, 42-43). Shawnee Mission, KS: Autism Asperger Publishing Company. www.asperger.net

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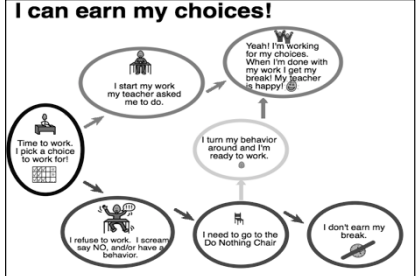
5 Point Scale

When using the 5 point scale with students with ASD, it is very important to provide them with information, we **must** identify the overt behaviors that indicate how they are feeling. Most people on the spectrum have difficulty identifying there own feelings, we can help them by letting them know what we see! The goal is *self regulation*, not our ability to regulate for them.

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Behavior Mapping

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Behavior Mapping Example

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Social Narratives and
Social Stories ™

A Social Story™ describes a situation, skill, or concept in terms of relevant social cues, perspectives, and common responses in a specifically defined style and format. The goal of a Social Story™ is to share accurate social information in a patient and reassuring manner that is easily understood by its audience. Half of all Social Stories™ developed should affirm something that an individual does well.
Carol Gray

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kansasasd.com
social narratives bank

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Power Cards

•Power Cards use special interests to teach and reinforce academic, behavioral and social skills

•They usually include a picture of a special interest as well as solutions to a difficult situation broken into 3 to 5 steps.

•Power cards often reinforce skills taught in a script or social narrative.

•Unlike social narratives power cards can be carried in a pocket, clipped to something the student carries or placed in a prominent place for the student to see.

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Power Card with Reinforcement Example

Just like Dora!!
Dora wants me to remember these 3 things:
1. Keep my hands down
2. Use my words with a quiet voice
3. Keep working hard.

① ② ③ ④
Just like Dora!!
⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧
8 checks = _____

Yellow School Bus Tour, 2007

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Calming Support Example Count Down Strip & Time Timer

This strategy shows the student how much longer/ how many more he/she is required to complete before finished.

How Much Longer?
5 4 3 2 1
all done

Timetimer.com

Katie Wheeler

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Calming Support Example A Visual To Show What "Relax" Means

This strategy focuses on helping the student calm down by breathing deeply. If 5 breaths are not enough, at the bottom of the visual is a choice board - "I need more breaths" or "I'm finished; I'm relaxed."

Relax
5 4 3 2 1
I need more breaths or I'm finished, I'm relaxed

Katie Wheeler

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Slide 1

You invest time in developing strategies.
Don't forget to also invest time in teaching the student and those around him
How
Why
When
and
Where
to use strategies

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Slide 2

Some useful websites

www.kansasasd.com
www.adaptedlearning.com
www.usevisualstrategies.com
www.do2learn.com
www.autisminternetmodules.org
www.mayer-johnson.com
www.autismnetwork.org
www.icontalk.com

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References

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Delano, M. E. (2007). Video modeling interventions for individuals with autism. *Remedial and Special Education, 28*(1), 33-42.
www.pecsusa.com

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