Introduction to High Functioning Autism

Objectives

- Participants will gain knowledge of characteristics and differences specific to individuals with high functioning autism
- Participants will gain knowledge of supports for individuals with ASD to increase their success in both the general and special education environments and vocational settings.
- Participants will gain knowledge about various technology tools that can support individuals with an ASD.
Autism Spectrum Disorders

In own world

Non-verbal

Stereotypical behaviors

High Sensitivity

Social Interaction

HFA/AS Syndrome

Active but inept

Communication

Verbal but inept

Restricted, Repetitive Behaviors/Interests

Limited flexibility

Restricted interests

Rigid routines

Response to Sensory Experiences

Preferences in response to anxiety

Underlying Characteristics of HFA (Look Beneath the Surface)
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

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
Restricted Patterns of Behavior, Interests, and Activities

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

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
• Facial expressions
Emotional Vulnerability

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

Features That 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
Strengths of Individuals with ASDs

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

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)
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. Some good resources include the following:

- Social Skills Instruction (Jed Baker, Scott Bellini)
- Social Thinking by Michelle Garcia Winner

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
Hidden Curriculum cont.

If you find yourself saying things like:
  • I shouldn’t have to tell you, but...
  • It should be obvious that...
  • Everyone knows that...
  • Common sense tells us...
You probably are dealing with a hidden curriculum item.

Myles, 2004

Hidden Curriculum Example

Adults do not like it when kids point out the things they are doing wrong (even if they are). It is not your responsibility to teach grownups how to do things. It’s better just to keep quiet. The exception is an emergency.
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-answers/preventing-bullying

Working with Students with High Functioning Autism/Asperger Syndrome...
Reinforcement and ASD

Reinforcement/Motivation-

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.

Increase Motivation and Learning Through Reinforcement
Reinforcement

90% of the Effectiveness of a Program is REINFORCEMENT!

No Reinforcer – No Lesson!

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.

First/Then Example

This student wanted to always know what he had to do first, and then what he had to do second. The language was changed to 1st/2nd to individualize to the student.
Just Give Him the Whale

20 Ways to Use Fascinations, Areas of Expertise, and Strengths to Support Students with Autism

By: Paula Kluth

Emotional/Behavior Supports
Stop-Observe-Deliberate-Act

**SODA**

- **Stop:** uses self-questioning to figure out new situations
- **Observe:** tries to find what social cues are being used
- **Deliberate:** figures out how to be successful in the situation
- **Act:** follows through on plan developed during Deliberate stage

http://www.txautism.net/Target-Texas-autism-resource-guide-for-effective-teaching

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**Social Autopsies**

- Helps show cause and effect of the situation
- Uses positive reinforcement
- Teaches problem solving framework
- Utilizes pictures or words

**Social Autopsy Worksheet**

http://www.txautism.net/Target-Texas-autism-resource-guide-for-effective-teaching
Incredible 5 Point Scale

- Controls emotional reactions
- Student participates
- Identifies problem
- Enhances alternative, positive behaviors

www.5pointscale.com

Appendix

The Stress Scale

- 5: I could lose control
- 4: Can really upset me
- 3: Makes me nervous
- 2: Bugs me
- 1: Never bothers me
Academic/Work Supports

![Image of a child using a computer]

Fairness

“Fairness is not giving everyone the same thing. Fairness is giving the individual what they need to succeed.”

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

**Home Base**

- Enjoyable, quiet activity in a low stimulus area
- High stimulus activities are avoided (computer, Nintendo, TV)
- Not used to escape work
- Can be used as a part of the routine
- Use as a preventative measure
- Child can be taught to self-manage
Visual Supports

- Not readily noticeable (age appropriate)
- Easily accessible

Graphic Organizers

- Created by teachers prior to or during lecture
- Visually organizes information
- Highlights important information
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
- Contact the Assistive Technology Partnership or AT4ALL for technology available to reduce writing

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
Changes in Schedule/Unstructured Times

- Bus
- Specials
- Lunch
- Recess
- Transitions / Class changes
- Assemblies
- Fire drills
- Seating Changes
- Substitute Teachers

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!**
15 Tools to Help Students Get Organized

Awesome website developed by Richard Byrne on tools to help students get organized.

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...
- None of them may be what another student needs!
A Few Additional Web Resources

NE ASD Network website

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

- Upcoming Trainings
- First Signs Video
- Regional Websites and Lending Libraries
- Evidence Based Practices Guide
- Online Training Links
HFA – What Do The Experts Say…

Voices of Autism

Have you Heard of Pinterest?

Great boards on pinterest for activities, videos, stories, visuals and other tools to teach social skills and social thinking concepts.

• Go to www.pinterest.com to sign up

• ASD Network Pinterest Board www.pinterest.com/neasdnetwork/

• 4 All Social Thinking Therapists: www.pinterest.com/mhkeiger/4-all-social-thinking-therapists/

• Jill Kuzma’s pinterest boards: http://pinterest.com/jillkuzma/

References


IAN RESEARCH REPORT: BULLYING AND CHILDREN WITH ASD: Connie Anderson, Ph.D. IAN Community Scientific Liaison; ian@kennedykrieger.org. Date Published: March 26, 2012
Thanks for Joining Us Today

Please visit our website to contact us or for additional resources:

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