



12<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL AUTISM  
CONFERENCE 2022

THEME: CREATING A COMMUNITY OF

**AWE-TISM**  
Advocates



**Topic:**  
**Community Involvement**  
**My Involvement, Your Inclusion**

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# Agenda

- Introduction
- Why community inclusion?
- Supporting the community to detect ASD persons
- Overcoming barriers to intervention
- Counseling parents on need for intervention
- Providing intervention through therapy services
- Overcoming challenges for low income families
- Work to be done
- Conclusion



# Introduction

Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) charter guarantees “all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights, and are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood”

Persons with living with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) suffer a range of behavioral, social and communications challenges due to development changes in the brain



Likewise, the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) #4 is to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”

Discrimination against persons with ASD is against their fundamental human rights

WE ALL, are responsible for ensuring persons with ASD are included in our communities and society at large.



# What is Community Inclusion

Community inclusion is a deliberate process that promotes the healthy development of persons living with ASD, through:

- ✓ **Inclusion in daily family and community activities**
- ✓ **Participation in play and educational activities**
- ✓ **Elimination of segregation by educating their parents and peers**
- ✓ **Development of variety of skills to help promote livelihoods**





# Overcoming Barriers to Inclusion

There are limitations and barriers in our everyday living and for parents who have children with ASD, these barriers are magnified:



- Lack of understanding of ASD by parents
- Lack of understanding by education providers
- Lack of understanding by the community
- Ignorance
- Stigmatization and Segregation
- Quick fix mentality



# Supporting the Community

We can support families and communities overcome these challenges and help families feel less isolated and be more informed, by:



- Creating, raising awareness and improving understanding of ASD
- Providing education, training and support to parents, teachers and help-givers
- Demonstrating successes of intervention therapy
- Funding research into a better understanding of possible causes and evidence-based practices.



# Counselling Parents on Inclusion

A diagnosis of autism creates concerns and challenges for parents, and there's a need for counseling to overcome these:


- Social Stigmatization and Exclusion**
- Grieving over the Disorder**
- The Financial Burden**
- Possible Blame and Acquisitions**
- Possible Separation and Divorce**





# Providing Intervention

Evidence-Based intervention strategies and practices have been quite effective at helping ASD persons using the process below

- ✓ Perform initial baseline assessment that cover behaviour, social and communications skills
- ✓ Create bespoke IEPs per child
- ✓ Provide integrated interventions using certified therapy providers at school and at home
  
- ✓ Frequent Pre-meditated interventions and follow-ups
- ✓ Carry out monthly assessments that produce performance reports and actions plans
- ✓  Execute corrective actions where necessary



# Overcoming Challenges

*“One out of every 150 children live with Autism “*

This amounts to about **600,000** Nigerians Children

*Presenting a significant challenge for - Many parents who not have the required funds.*

- ❑ **Community intervention funded by co-operate organizations, enhancing wider grassroots intervention, especially outside urban centers.**
- ❑ **The latest statistics from NBS<sup>2</sup> and the World Bank indicate that almost 4 out of 10 of Nigerians live below the poverty line and cannot afford to spend up to ₦2,000 daily**
- ❑ **Typically, middle-income families with ASD persons spent between ₦60,000 to ₦150,000 per month per child with ASD, to get professional therapy support**
- ❑ **This means thousands of children have not been identified and do not receive therapy that can help reverse the negative outcomes from lack of intervention.**

1.  <https://www.icsjournal.org/article.asp?issn=2468-6859;year=2014;volume=11;issue=2;spage=33;epage=34;aulast=Lesi>

2.  National Bureau of Statistics (NBS)



# More Work Needs to be Done

GTCO Leads in creating awareness & Supporting the Autism Community.  
However, the next phase, we believe should be more grassroot intervention & support.

- Wider access to helpful resources via information hubs within its branches.
- Working with the Autism community to fund assessments within the catchment communities
- Create community-based counselling groups to improve parental support for dealing with ASD persons
- Identify, train and certify therapists to intervene directly in communities with ASD persons identified by the assessment program



**Doing these can create further direct impact in more communities fostering improved Grassroot Community Inclusion**



## In Conclusion.....

Community inclusion is a deliberate act driven by our thoughts, words and actions.

- Time for **talk is over**, we need to be more active
- Let us **embrace** the challenge by moving from conferences and events to actual direct community intervention
- The Autism community is peopled by well-intentioned persons and organizations that deserve support
- Let us all, individuals and **corporations**, redirect our energies towards intervening in the lives of **10,000** ASD persons over the next 3 years



**Together, we can do it!**



# THANKS FOR LISTENING

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