



Acceptance

in

Action

- Family ▪ Classroom
- Workplace ▪ Public Spaces

Practical Behavior Strategies for Diverse Learning Environments

By

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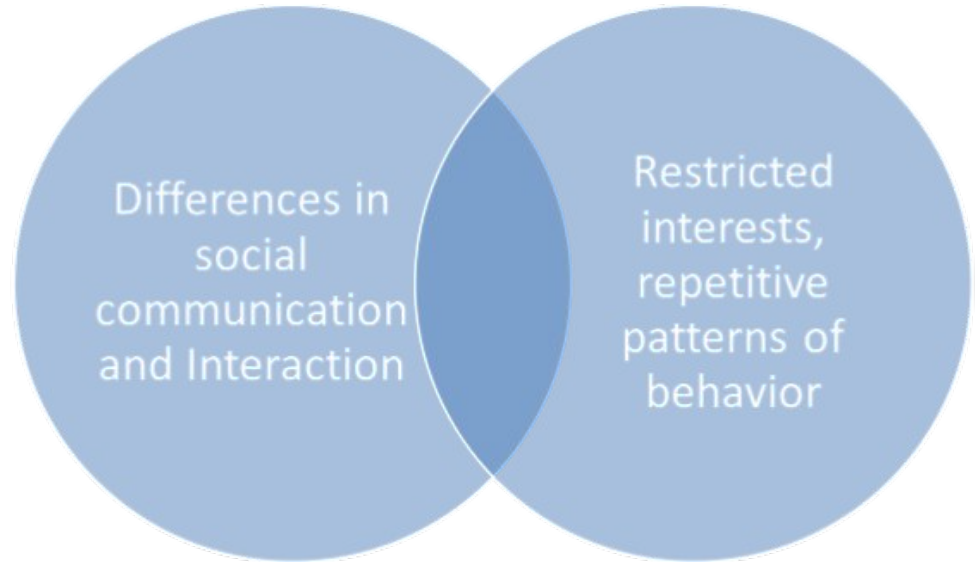
Objectives

Identify	common behavioral challenges observed in children with Autism across various learning environments.
Describe	key factors that contribute to the function and purpose of challenging behaviors.
Apply	evidence-based, practical strategies to decrease challenging behaviors and increase prosocial skills effectively.

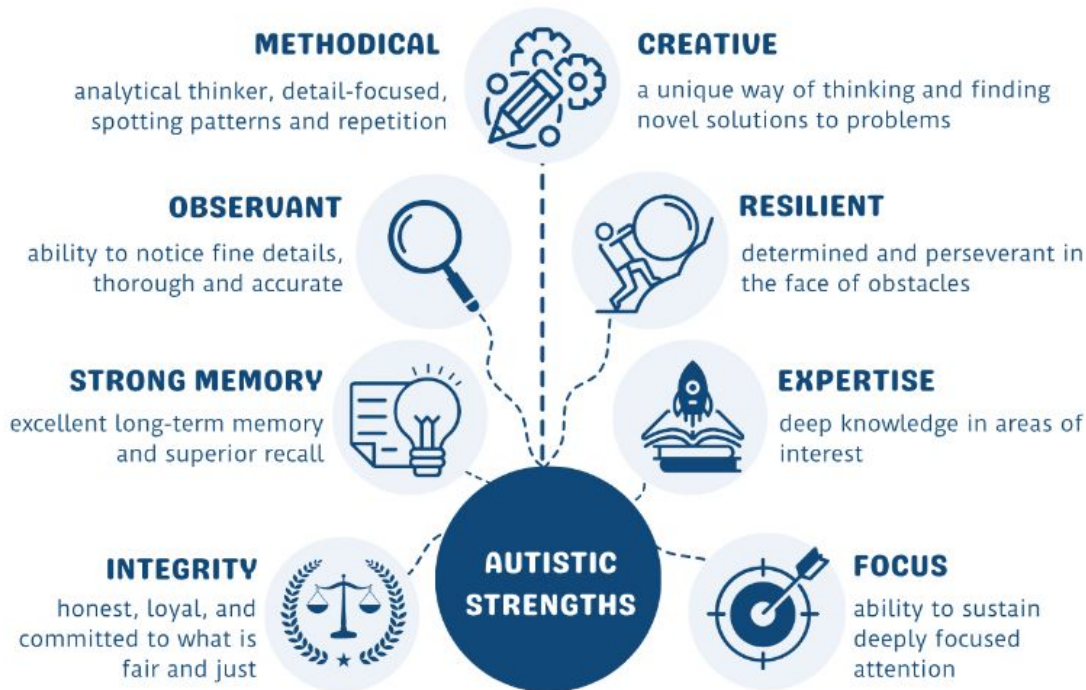


What is Autism Spectrum Disorder?

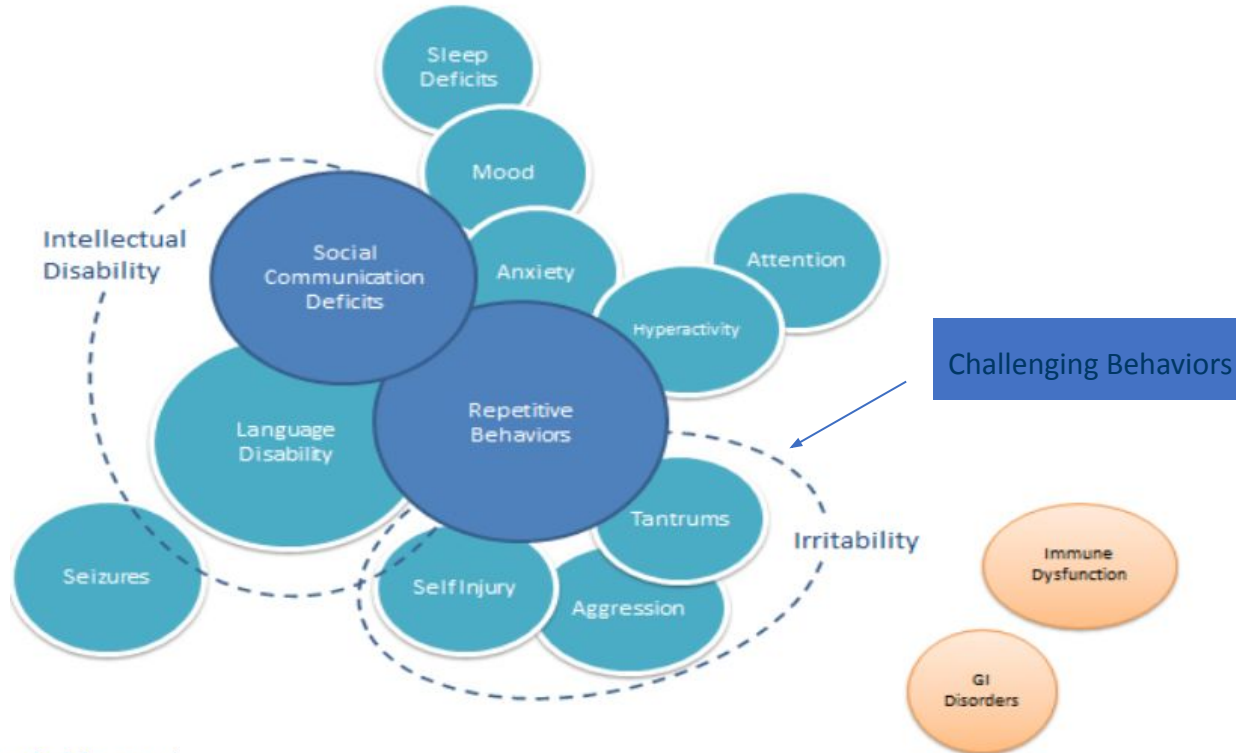
It is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by differences in two major areas



Autism Strengths



Autism and Related Conditions



What are Challenging Behaviors (CBs)?

Any repeated pattern of behavior, or perception of behavior, that **interferes with or is at risk of interfering** with optimal learning or engagement in pro-social interactions with peers and adults (Smith & Fox, 2003)

Challenging behaviors are behaviors that interfere with a person's safety, learning, or social



Common CBs

- Aggression
- Disruption
- Non-compliance
- Self-injurious
- Property Destruction
- Elopement



Prevalence

- High (56-94%)
- Most common is aggression, followed by SIB
- Persists over time
- Linked to high stress and lower quality of life for caregivers

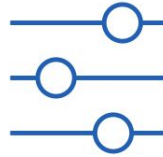
Settings

- Home
- Classroom
- Clinic/Hospital
- Community Settings, etc

Possible Reasons



They are communicative



They occur in context



They are learned over time



Possible Reasons

Physical Discomfort or
Pain

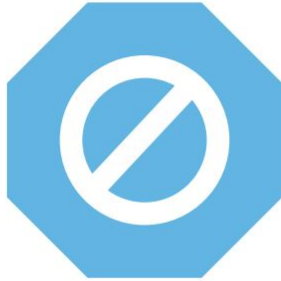
Sensory Sensitivities

Skill Deficits

Environmental Factors



Behavioral Strategies



Prevent

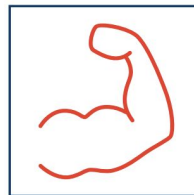


Respond



Inclusivity and Neurodiversity

- Brain differences are normal
- Embracing differences vs. focusing on a cure
- Variation increases creativity



Focus on individual's
strengths as well as needs

Reduce stigma around
differences



Behavioral Strategies



Prevention



Modify The Environment



Modify the Environment



Definition: Refers to changing the aspects of the child's surroundings to make appropriate behavior easier and challenging behavior less likely

- Proactive modifications of physical or social surroundings
 - You PLAN ahead of time!



Modify the Environment

What is happening in the child's environment?

- Has something changed? (e.g., teacher, therapist, setting)
- Sensory input? (e.g., too much, too little, loud noises, bright lights)
- Is the student hungry or tired?
- Medication?
- Sleep?



Modify the Environment: Do's

Seating arrangements

Recognize and respond to early signs

Establishing a “cool down” zone

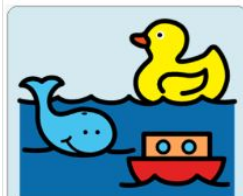
Make necessary materials accessible

Use visual and predictable routines/schedules



Routine and Visual Supports

Evening Routine



take a bath



put on pajamas



brush teeth



put away toys



read aloud



sleep



GOOD MORNING ROUTINE



Make Bed



Go to the
washroom



Wash Face



Brush Teeth



Brush Hair



Get Dressed



Eat
Breakfast



Put Shoes
On



GOOD NIGHT ROUTINE



Put Toys
Away



Eat Dinner



Take a Bath



Put On
Pajamas



Brush Hair



Brush Teeth



Go to the
washroom



Read a Book



Modify the Environment- Example

An autistic child is loud, overwhelmed, and tries to escape the classroom during independent work. The classroom is often overstimulating, chaotic, and has flickering lights.

- Adjust/Replace lights.
- Create a “quiet work zone” with a visual schedule and organized materials
- Provide noise cancelling headphone to minimize auditory distractions



Next: Modify your Communication



Modify your Communication

The way we ask or respond verbally to situations can impact the outcome

- Use simple language
- Pointing or modeling
- Avoid responding with “NO!”
- Use First, Then
- Provide warnings when there is a change coming



FIRST THEN



Effective Communication

STEP 1

- Using communication system that is in the child's repertoire
 - Verbal, AAC, sign language, PECS.



Effective Communication

Step 2:

- **Get the child's attention**
- Stand near and call for attention
- Tap on shoulder; Say "look at me" or "over here" or "eyes on me"



Effective Communication



Step 3:

Give simple and clear instructions

- Example: "Please sit in your chair."
- Don't ask a question you do not want the answer to
- Example: "Can you sit down?"
- "NO!"

Effective Communication

Step 4:

- **As child complies, provide praise**

Example: "I liked the way you picked up the crayon when I asked you."



Next: Behavior Momentum



Behavior Momentum

- Used to encourage students to complete an undesired task or activity
- Introduce a series of high-probability requests prior to a low probability request
- By asking a student to complete a series (3-5) of easy/desired tasks, the teacher builds *behavioral momentum*, which increases the likelihood of the student completing the undesired task



Behavior Momentum

Steps

- Present 3-5 easy/mastered skills
- Reinforce after each correct response
- Request target skill
- Provide reinforcement

Example: “go potty” = low probability task

1. “High five!” → child complies
2. “What your name?” → child complies
3. “Stomp your feet!” → child complies
4. “Clap your hands!” → child complies
5. “Time to go potty!” → child complies



Behavior Momentum

Example: Math workbook = low probability task

- “James, please erase the board for me.”
Student complies
- “Thanks. You did that so quickly. Please write today’s date on the board.”
Student complies
- “Great work, James! Please pass out these papers.”
Student complies
- “Nice job passing out the papers. Please sit down and open your math workbook to page 25.”
Student complies



Next: Instructional Choice



Instructional Choice

Definition: Giving a student options between activities, assignments to increase motivation

Often used proactively to reduce challenging behaviors especially for avoidance or escape maintained behaviors

Two Types

- **Between** activities
- **Within** activities



Instructional Choice

I am working towards...

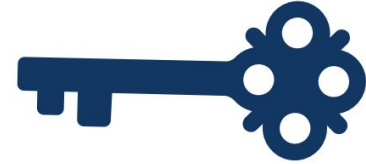
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Examples

- **Location:** complete assignment in different locations
- **Format:** web or text based
- **Topic Selection:** writing topics
- **Choice boards:** when choosing reinforcers

Instructional Choice



Keep in mind...

- Avoid overloading - limit choices to two or three
- Provide praise after a choice is made
- Provide options for choice making
- Teach, model, and practice



Take Homes



Behaviors happen for a reason



Modify your environment



Build in choices where possible



Use clear and simple instructions



Thank You!
Your Feedback is Appreciated



