



An Introduction to Autism

Thursday, October 19 | 2:00 p.m. ET

Sponsored by



cornerstone

CUPA-HR Webinar

Presenter



Christy Sigler, JD, CAAP

Assistant to the President for Institutional
Equity and Compliance, Title VI Coordinator,
Title IX Coordinator,
Middle Tennessee State University

Agenda

- Identify Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Possible Manifestations/Features
- Communication Challenges
- Interventions/Services
- Communication Tips
- Resources



Objectives

- Improve interactions with individuals on the autism spectrum
- Identify services sought through employee benefits



Poll Question

How much do you feel you know about
Autism Spectrum Disorder?

- Almost everything
- A little
- Nothing

Autism Spectrum Disorder

Autism

Asperger's Syndrome

PDD-NOS

CDD

Inconsistency

Splitting diagnoses was difficult

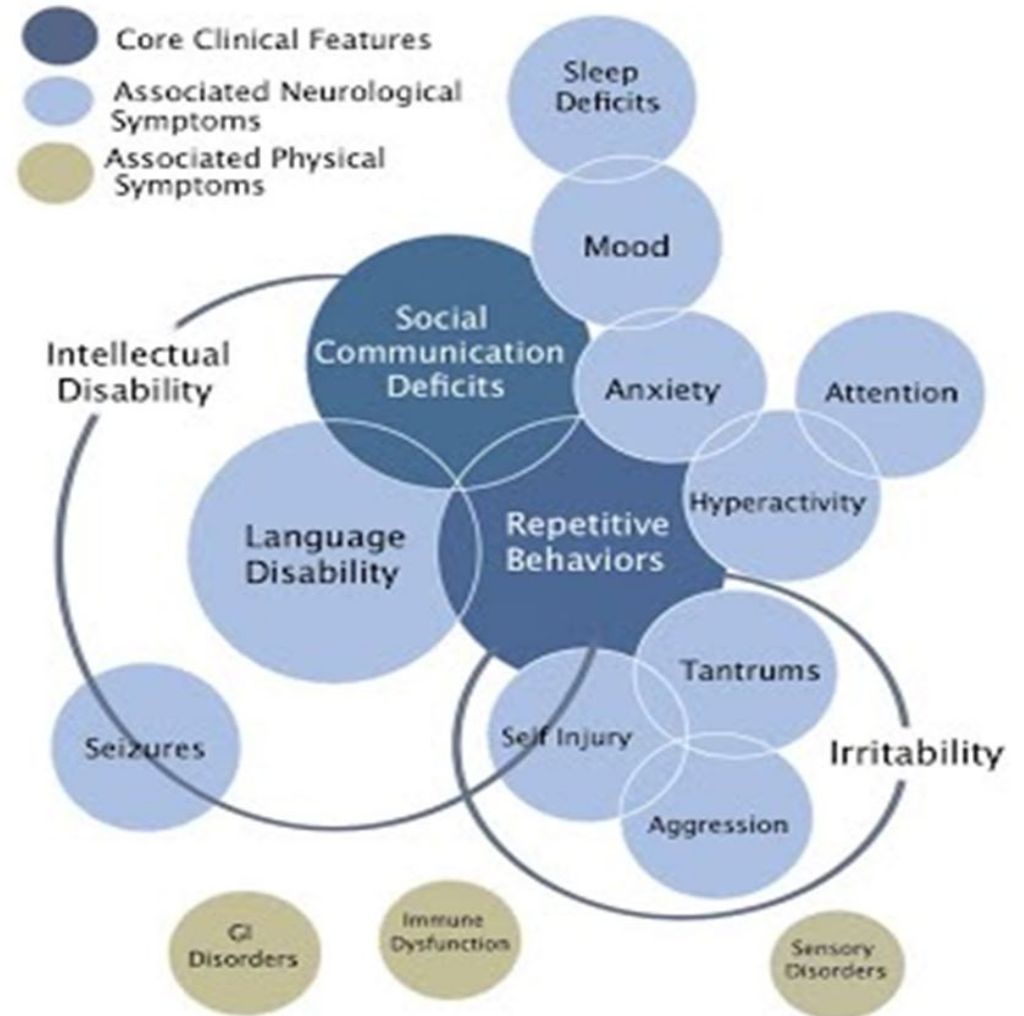


Definition

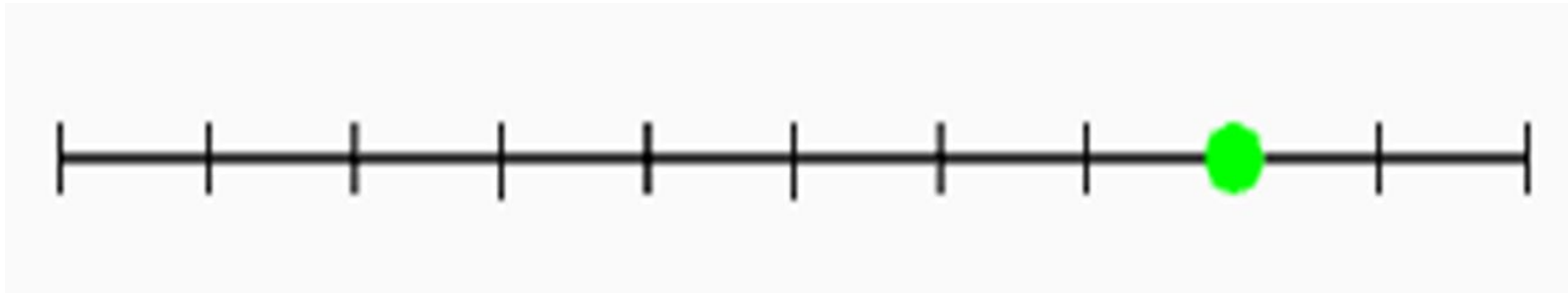
A complex neurodevelopmental disability that impairs a person's abilities to process input, communicate, and interact

- “Neurodevelopmental disability” = based in the brain and the way the brain works
- Appears to be based on combination of genes and environment
- Can be co-occurring with other conditions; critical to seek professional diagnosis

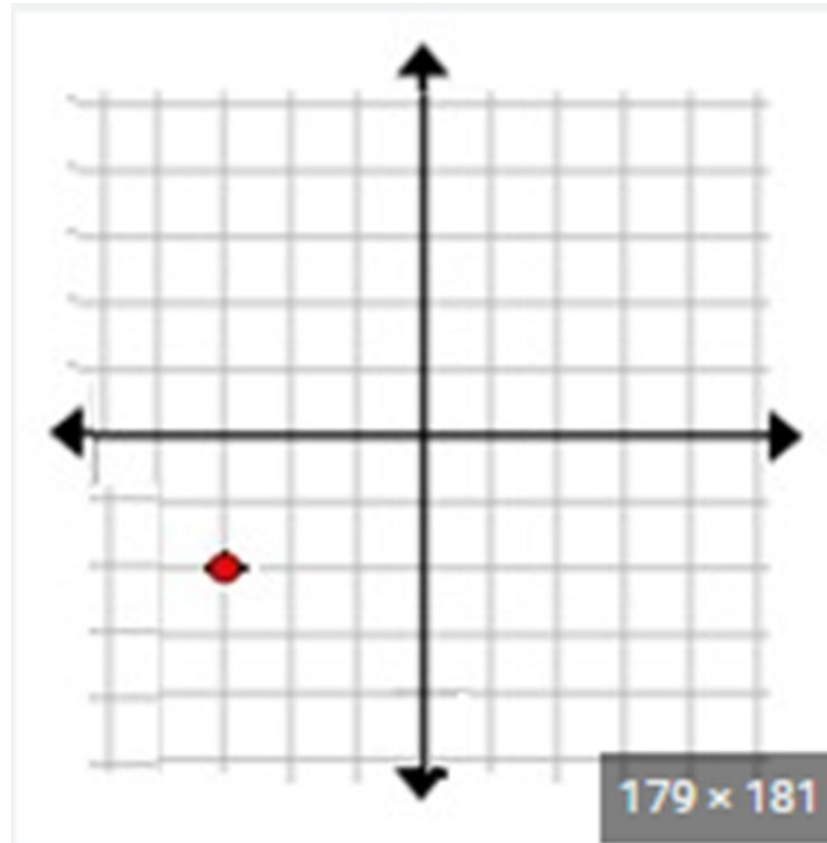
Manifestations/ Overarching Features



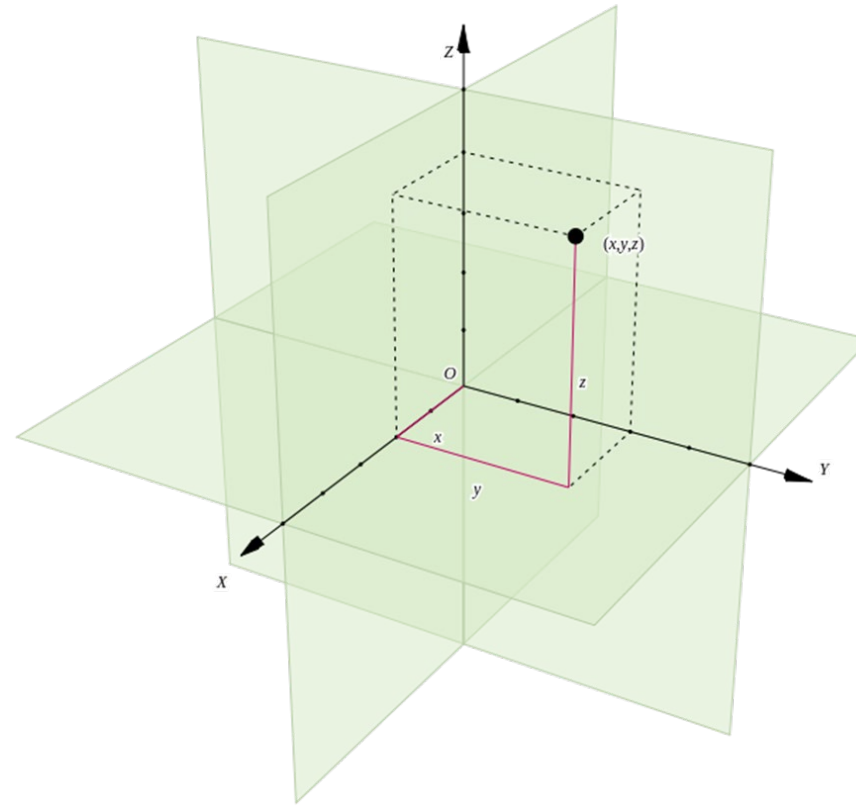
Autism Spectrum?



Autism Spectrum?



Autism Spectrum?



Autism Spectrum



Neurodiversity

“The idea that people experience and interact with the world around them in many different ways; there is no one ‘right’ way of thinking, learning, and behaving, and differences are not viewed as deficits”

- ASD, ADHD, ABI, NVLD, OCD
- 7 Principles of Universal Design

Demographics

- No association with race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status
- 4x more common in males
- Prevalence
 - i. 2007 (*2000): 1 in 150
 - ii. 2009 (*2006): 1 in 110
 - iii. 2012 (*2008): 1 in 88
 - iv. 2016 (*2014): 1 in 68
 - v. 2023 (*2020): 1 in 36


Differences in the Brain

- Neural connections built at/after birth
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VNNsN9IJKws>
- Pruning
- Experiences not translated into skills
- Stress response system
- Example: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aPknwW8mPAM&t=6s>

Three Core Concepts in Early Development

1 Experiences Build Brain Architecture

NATIONAL SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL ON THE DEVELOPING CHILD

Center on the Developing Child  HARVARD UNIVERSITY

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VNNsN9lJkws&t=75s&ab_channel=CenterontheDevelopingChildatHarvardUniversity

Differences in the Brain

- Neural connections built at/after birth
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VNNsN9IJKws>
- Pruning
- Experiences not translated into skills
- Stress response system
- Example: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aPknwW8mPAM&t=6s>



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aPknwW8mPAM&t=6s&ab_channel=NationalAutisticSociety

Accommodation Examples

Sensory

- fire drill notice
- alternative lighting
- noise cancelling headset
- desk pedaling unit

Personal digital assistant

Task separation

Job coaching

Duration

- Children may:
 - Have delayed development from birth,
 - Develop typically until sudden loss of skills [age 2-3], or
 - Seem on track until enough language/social skills would be present but instead atypical communication/preoccupations can be observed
- Does not end with childhood



lifetime social cost

Social costs associated with autism for 1990–2019 are estimated at \$7 trillion dollars. If the rate of increase in prevalence continues, costs to society could reach nearly \$15 trillion by 2029. These estimates only reflect what society pays, not the additional expenses families incur out of their own pockets.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT COST](#)

<https://tacanow.org/about-autism/>

Experiences

Non-speaking: 40%

Elopement: 49%

Anxiety: 40%

Seizures: 38%

Sleep disorders: 53%

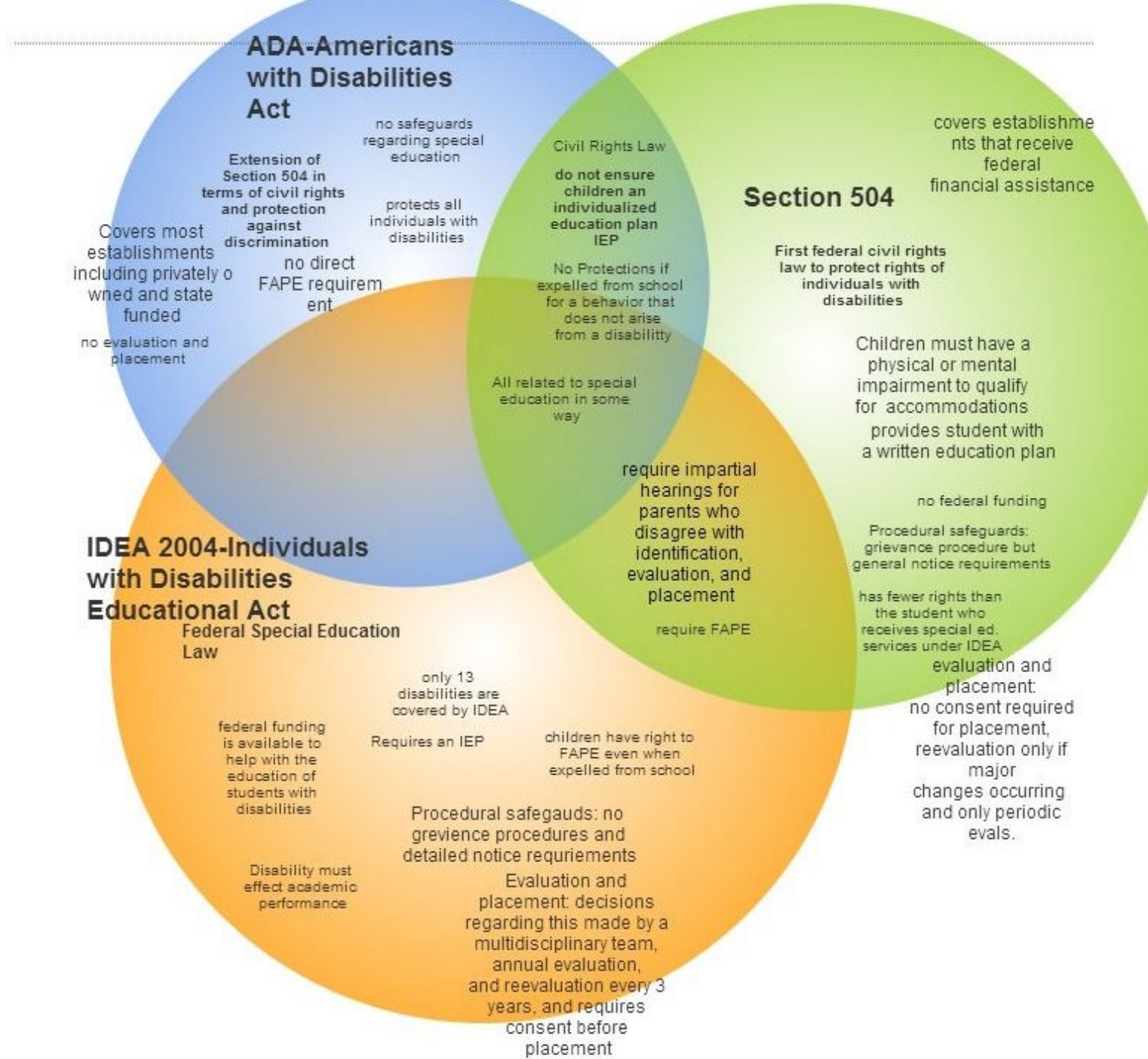
Above-avg. IQ: *40%

Gastrointestinal problems: 4x more

Unmet medical needs: 4x more

Co-occurring medical conditions: 95% (avg. of 4.9 each)

Intersection of Laws



Dependence

Adults with ASD:

49% live with parent/relative

27% live in group homes

8% live in institutions

**5% living situations are
unknown**

10% live independently



14%

**of adults with autism
have paid jobs in
community-based
settings**

LEARN MORE ABOUT EMPLOYMENT IN AUTISM

<https://tacanow.org/about-autism/>



**Middle-aged adults with ASD:
2.6x more likely to have a
diagnosis of Alzheimer's/
other dementias**



age 72

is the average life expectancy
of an individual without autism



age 36

is the average life expectancy
of an individual with autism

40x

more likely to die from
preventable injuries

LEARN MORE ABOUT INJURY MORTALITY IN AUTISM



Risk

<https://tacanow.org/about-autism/>

- No cure
- Continuing stress on caregivers

"People who are 'high functioning' or 'don't look or act autistic' are still having a hard time. A lot of us do this thing called 'masking,' where we basically act as if we are neurotypical based on the stuff we learn from others. It is very exhausting to keep up that fake persona." —[u/jakobebeef98](#)



"Autists are the ultimate square pegs, and the problem with pounding a square peg into a round hole is not that the hammering is hard work. It's that you're destroying the peg."

~ Paul Collins

Accessing Services

Health/Nursing Care

Speech and Language Therapy

Behavioral Health

Mental Health

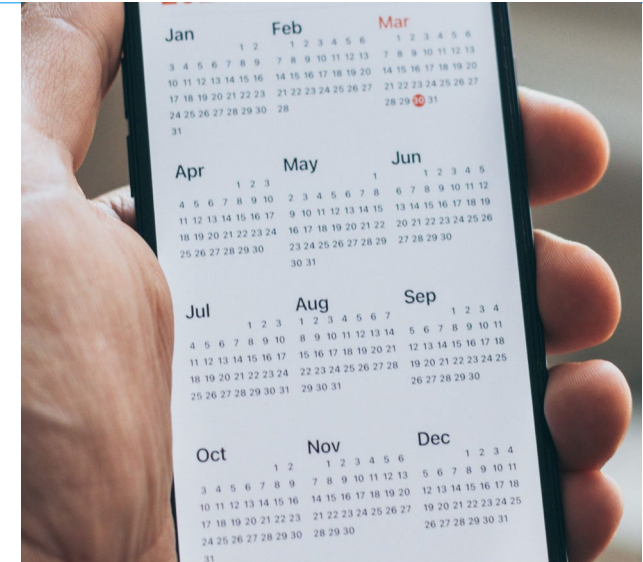
Occupational Therapy

Physical Therapy

Additional Therapies (Developmental, Equine, Music, etc.)

Special Education

Mentoring



Accessing Services

Education Advocacy

Financial Assistance

Employment Preparation

Service Animals

Adaptive Toys/Bikes/Learning Tools

Durable Medical Equipment/Adaptive Clothes

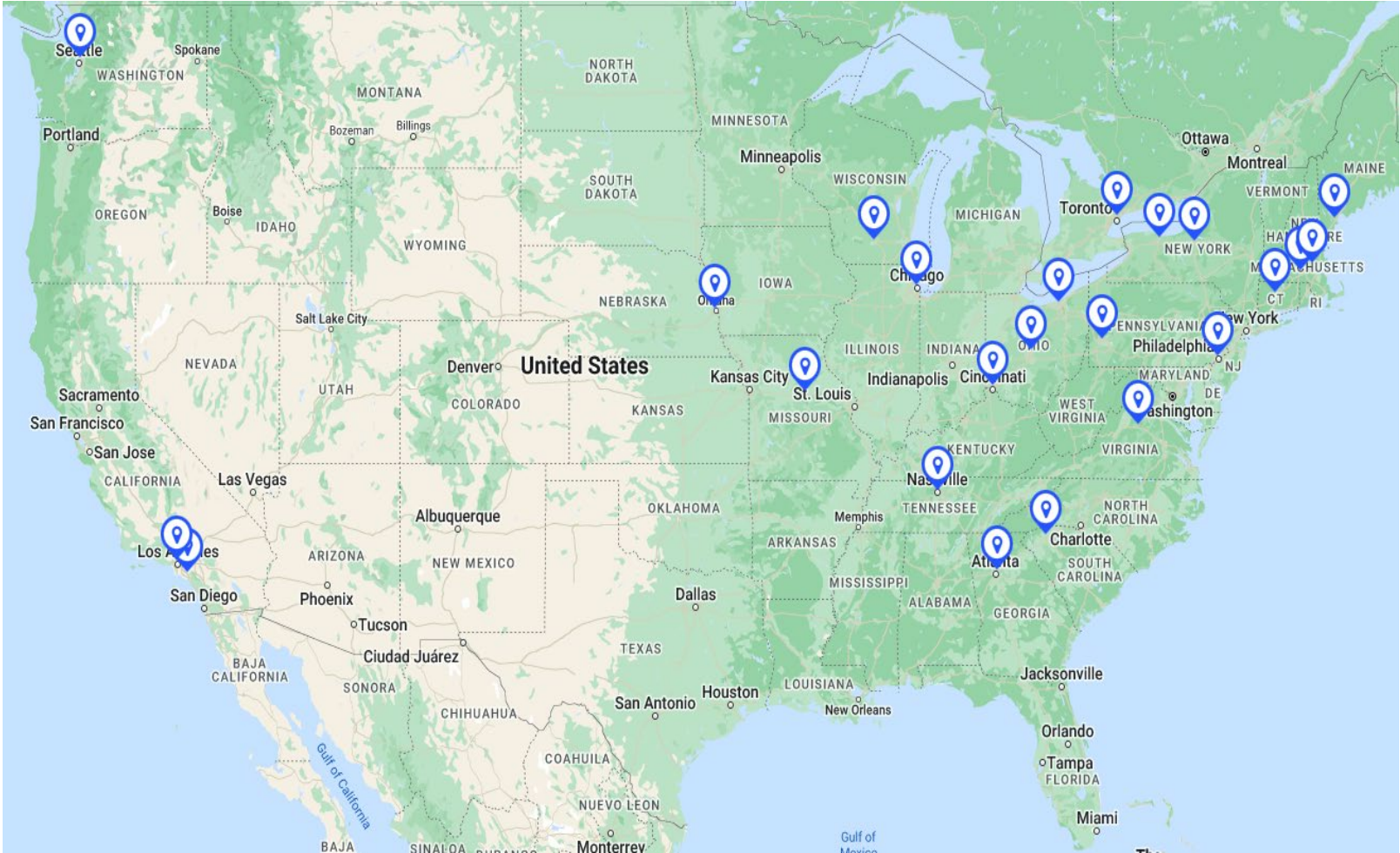
Consumable Medical Supplies

Respite Care

Legal/Financial Planning



*Check with local advocacy groups about emergency/police ID programs and unique offerings



Services

ACNet sites

Tele-mentoring
available

15 countries

Communication Tips

Reduce sensory input - but make fidgets available.

Be direct and use literal language.

Tell them it is okay to stim.

Allow for the use of coping skills like counting, deep breathing, or recitations.

Don't wait for/require eye contact.

Offer breaks.

Meet their preference/ability for means of communicating.

Check for understanding.

Don't judge. Be patient and mindful of their right to maintain dignity. Remind others not to stare, whisper, or tolerate bullying. But later explain what you know instead of keeping the topic in the shadows.

HR Tips

Engage, listen, and model inclusivity

Focus on strengths

Consider whether forms and processes can change

“always done this way” → why?

Interviews:

- Small talk
- Eye contact
- Concepts vs Concrete

Event Neuroinclusivity:

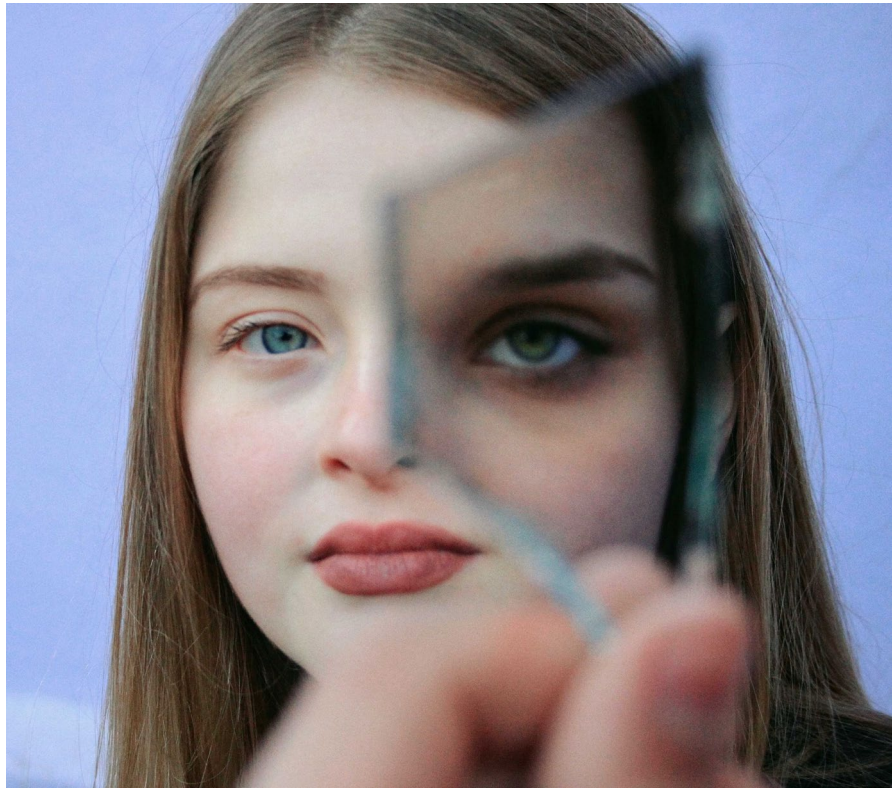
- info about venue, etc.
- closed captioning
- quiet areas for breaks and lunch
- standing space for people who need to move

Takeaways: Autism is...

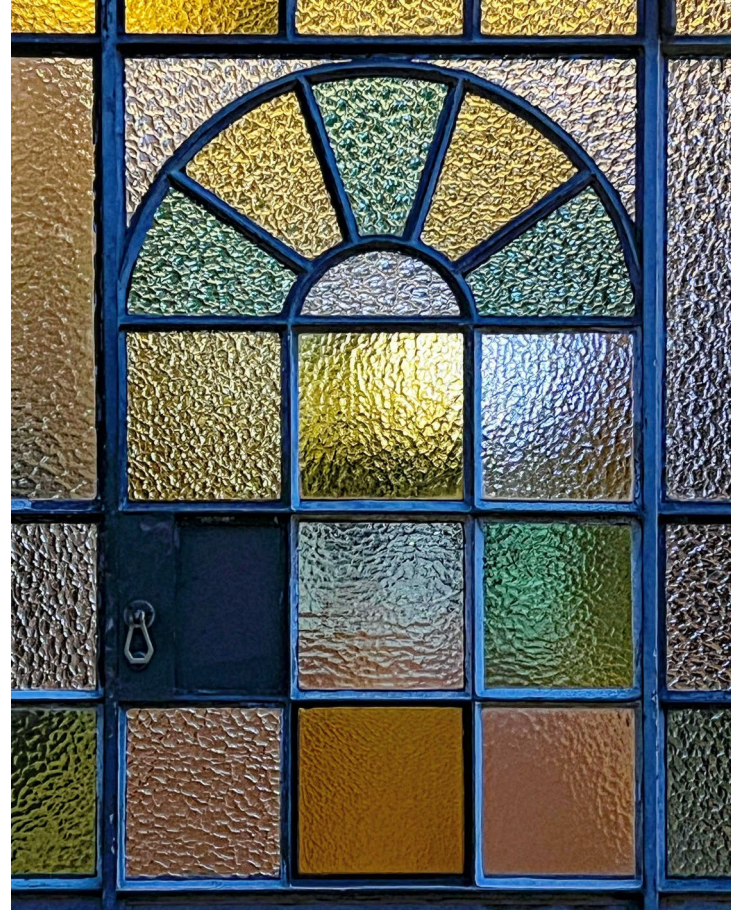
- Not Visible
- Everywhere
- Variable
- Not “Curable”
- Manageable With Resources
- NOT Misbehavior

AUTISM
M2I2W

Together



Together



Together



Have a Question?



Submit questions to our presenters
using the Chat.



Thank You

Please complete your event evaluation

Sponsored by



cornerstone