


imagine | include | innovate



THE  
autismhub

Helen Appleton



*We would like to acknowledge the Aboriginal traditional custodians of the land on which we gather the Wallumedegal people. We acknowledge their lore, traditions, customs and their role as caretakers that has led to the bountiful land, rivers and ocean we all enjoy today. We would also like to pay respect to the Elders both past and present and would like to acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders living on the land today and those who meet with us here.*



# Introduction

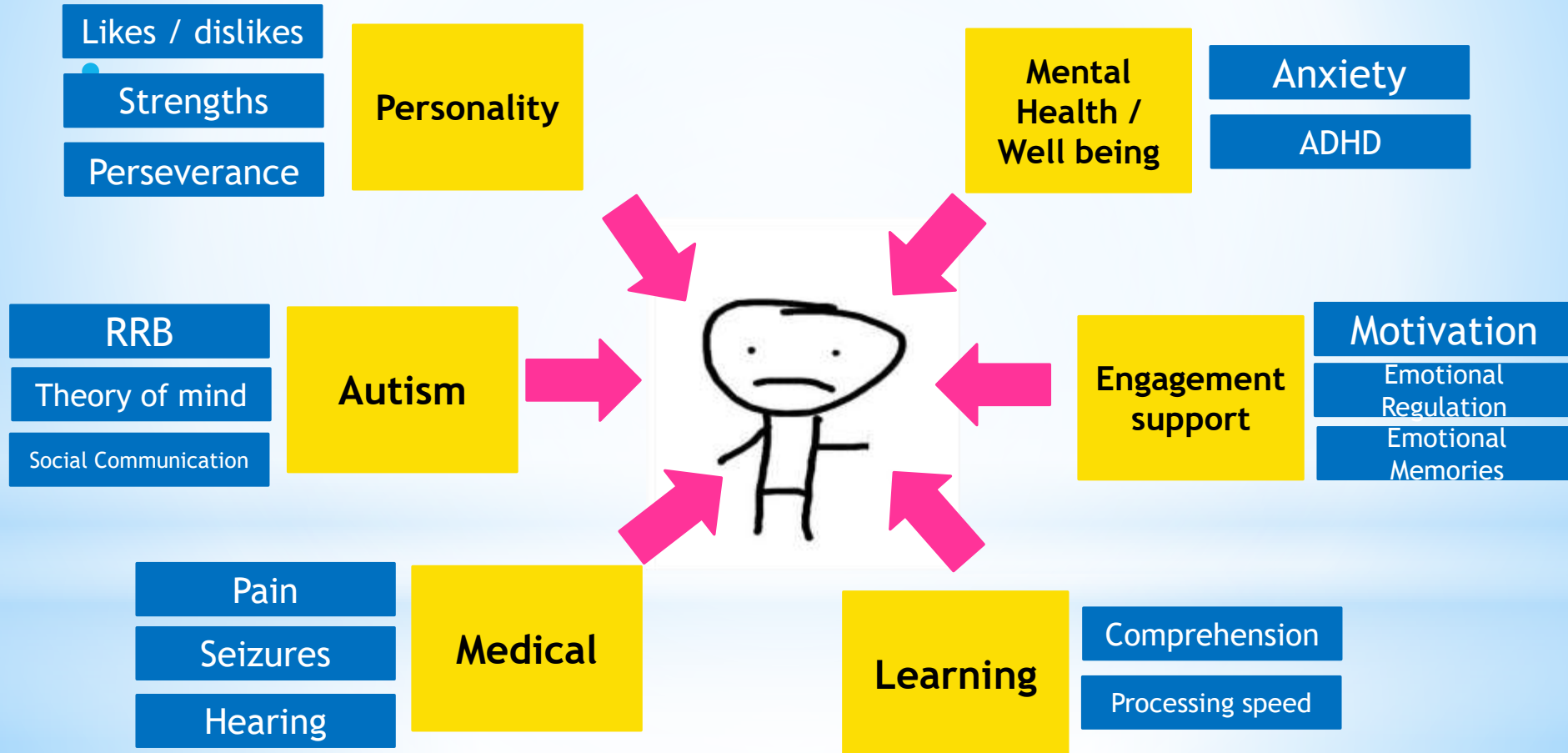


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# Thinking about the whole child



# ASD Diagnosis

## Social Communication

Difficulties with:

- Making and maintaining friends
- Sharing, understanding and expressing emotions
- Social norms (eg speech volume, speed, appropriate distance)
- Gestures
- Pointing, sharing, joint attention

# ASD Diagnosis

## Restricted & Repetitive Behaviours

- Hand flapping, toe walking, jumping, spinning
- Speech abnormalities: echolalia (delayed or immediate), tonal range, repetitive phrases, accents
- Inflexibility, transitional issues, eating, sleeping
- Things need to be the same
- Obsessive interests
- Sensory difficulties - different reactions to 6 senses

# ASD Diagnosis: information processing

## Theory of Mind



- Difficulty seeing others as separate to themselves
- Difficulty reading the emotions, thoughts and motives of others
- Difficulty with empathy and understanding the impact of their behavior on others

## Executive Functioning



- Difficulties with organisation, problem solving and strategic planning
- Focus on detail rather than big picture
- Difficulties with change and problem solving to cope with the changes that do occur

## Central Coherence



- Inability to see a bigger picture or patterns and instead focus on smaller detail
- Difficulties in predicting future events and outcomes
- Difficulty to generalise learning across contexts



# What else to think about?

## Sensory Processing



- Can be under or over sensitive to each sense:
- Touch
- Visual
- Smell
- Taste
- Sound
- Vestibular
- Proprioception

## Intellectual Disability



- Comprehension difficulties
- Processing speed difficulties
- Learn through repetition and routine
- Language and transient information difficult to grasp and comprehend

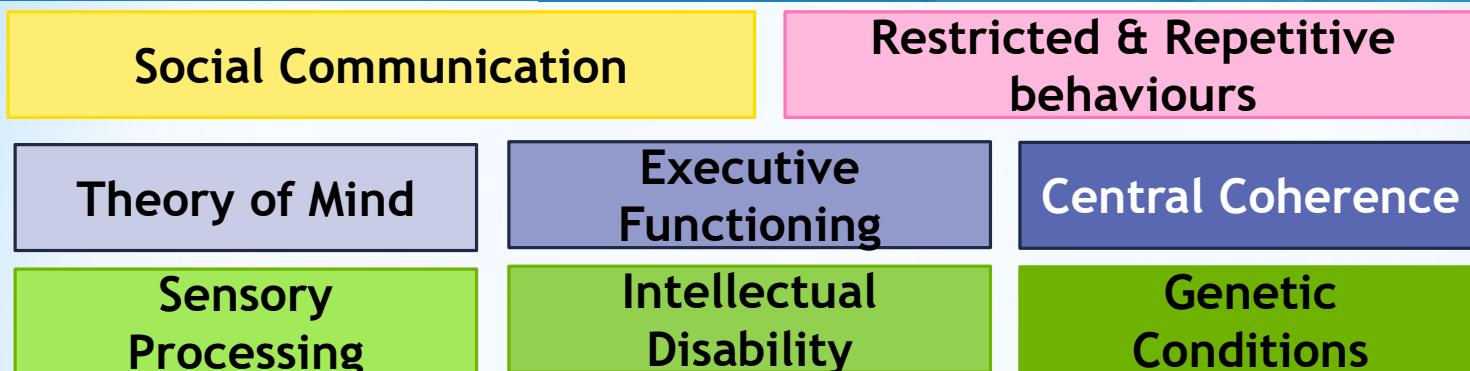
## Genetic Conditions



- Can affect all aspects of development
- May be very specific and well detailed or rare and poorly understood at this stage
- May present as 'atypical' autism
- Long term prognosis may be unknown



# ASD Diagnosis



- Fear and stress due to not understanding the world around them
- Difficulty in predicting the motives, feelings and behaviours of others
- Highly rigid behaviour to control what is uncontrollable and to try to reduce their anxiety
- Can not generalise skills and learning across environments
- Learn differently - through experience, in context, visually, not through commands and language
- Have to be taught how to interact with others in small steps
- Can be hard to regulate their emotions throughout the day, making it hard to learn and communicate
- Challenging and/or self-injurious behaviours as a result of frustration, anger and / or fear when there is no other means to communicate

# What can I do about it?

## Reactive strategies

“What do I do when it goes wrong?”

- Trying to get control of an out of control situation
- Negotiation and rational arguments are ineffective
- Create negative emotional memories

VS

## Proactive planning

“How do I make this process as successful as possible?”

- Forewarnings, planning, information
- Reduce anxiety and fear
- Create positive emotional memories

# Proactive Strategies

## **Arousal threshold**

- Being at the right level to participate (ie not passive or overly active)
- Can be easier to maintain if children know how long they have to sit still for or attend
- Some children may require help to maintain their arousal for long periods – this can be aided with sensory supports such as chewies, fiddle toys, items that smell
- Can be affected by how motivated they are in the topic / activity

## **Key elements to keep in mind:**











1. Understanding what to expect
2. Environmental management
3. Sensory considerations


















# Understanding what to expect

- \* Understanding what the day looks like
  - \* What will happen when and in what order
  - \* Who will be there
  - \* How long it will last
  - \* Where it takes place
  - \* Provides the scaffold for change
- \* Provide a clear outline of what will happen
  - \* Visual schedule
  - \* Video modelling
  - \* Be honest and follow through on what you say will happen

# Visual Schedules and Sequences



Monday		
1st	 Morning Meeting	morning meeting
2nd		cooking
3rd		e-book pirates
4th		
5th		transport
6th		toys
7th		
8th		news
9th		jobs
		home

8:00		Welcome	
8:15		Guided Reading	
9:00		Working With Words	
9:30		Morning Break	
9:45		Math	
10:45		Writing	
11:30		Lunch	
12:15		Science	
1:00		Art	
1:30		Self-Selected Reading	
2:00		Centers	
2:30		Music	
3:00		Home	
7:00		Parent Conference Tonight!	



# Procedures



Rubbish bin



Get Rubbish



Walk Orange bin



Put in bin



Get new bag



school photos



walk to old library



Sit stool



take photo

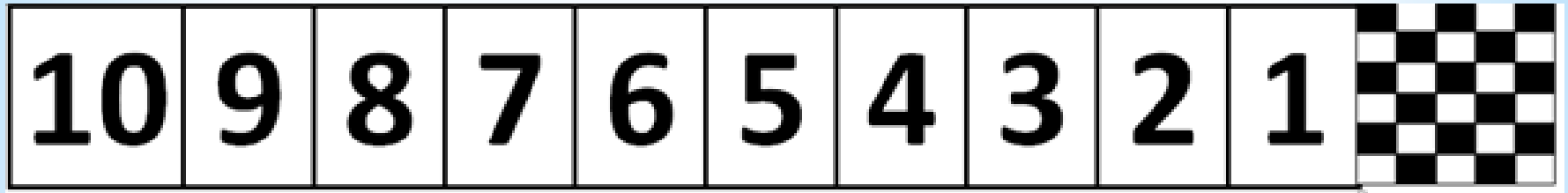


school photos finished

# Transitions



# How long?





# Environmental Management

Powerful means of communicating, nonverbally, about what will happen in a space.

- Zones eg learning, free time, eating
- Encouraging independence
- Clear what is to be focused on, minimal distractions
- Items not being used are unavailable - if personal items, then there should be a clear idea about when they come back
- Schedules / timetables / clocks- readily available
- Student placement within the classroom
- Break out spaces

# Sensory Considerations - Overactive

**Overactivity** is when a person's sensory system over responds to information and does not become used to it.

This results in fear responses.

*These students tend to:*

- limit sensory input
- ritualistic, uncooperative and rule bound.
- attempt to create a predictable environment.

**Sound:** Fingers in ears

**Touch:** Avoids playdough or wet textures.

**Visual:** Uses blinkers

**Taste:** Restricts diet

**Movement/ Balance:** Fear of stairs/steps

**Smell:** Avoids certain people



# Sensory Considerations - Underactive

**Underactivity** is when a person does not respond to normal levels of stimulation and requires extra levels of input in order for the body to get the full sensory picture.

*These students tend to:*

- actively pursue sensory input .
- very active
- tend not to stay on a task unless highly motivating

**Sound:** bangs loud objects.

**Touch:** loves messy play.

**Visual:** flicks in front of their face

**Taste:** puts lots of different flavours in their mouth.

**Movement/ Balance:** bouncing and spinning

**Body Position:** constantly crashes into things

**Smell:** smells everything.

# Sensory Considerations: Arousal

## **Arousal threshold**

- Being at the right level to learn (ie not passive or overly active)
- Can be easier to maintain if children know how long they have to sit still for or attend
- Some children may require help to maintain their arousal for long periods - this can be aided with sensory supports such as chewies, fiddle toys, items that smell
- Can be affected by how motivated they are in the topic
- Active participation over passive learning
- Breaking up lessons to include movement or more active components

# Sensory Considerations

Sense	To calm down	To increase arousal
Sound	Headphones, low level white noise	Interactive powerpoints with noises
Touch	Deep pressure, weighted blankets, brushing	Deep pressure, temperature changes
Visual	Lower lighting, less distractions, cleaner visual fields	Interactive powerpoints with colours and movements
Taste	water, ice Occasionally strong flavours	Strong flavours - ginger, sour sweets, mints, wasabi
Movement / Balance	Deep pressure, weighted blanket, heavy lifting, yoga	Dancing, therapy balls
Smell	Peppermint, vanilla	Lemon, chocolate, eucalyptus

# Meltdowns and shutdowns

- Happen when a student becomes overwhelmed by the world around, the expectations being placed on them, or things not matching up to what they expected
- Are an anxiety response, therefore incorporate both emotional and physiological responses
- Most closely related to panic attacks
- The student will not respond to logical arguments or reasoning

# Meltdowns and shutdowns - PROACTIVE

- Routine
- Predictability
- Consistency
- Choice
- Comprehension
- When control is ok
- Appropriate sensory supports



# Supporting Meltdowns

Early stress	Mid level stress	Full Meltdown
1. Decrease language use	1. Decrease language use	1. Remove others from around them
2. Increase non verbal communication eg. write instructions, use visuals	2. Remove from situation (can be within the room)	2. Ensure they are safe
3. Decrease expectations of independence	3. Give time and space to calm down	3. Give them time and space to calm down
4. Increase use of clear beginnings and ends eg timers, schedules	4. Offer sensory supports if appropriate	4. Offer sensory supports if appropriate
5. Offer sensory supports if appropriate	5. When visibly calm, use a timer to indicate when they should return	5. When visibly calm, use a timer to indicate when they should return
6. Maintain routine	6. Ask them to return to the previous activity, with a clear indication as to what they should do and how long it will last	6. Ask them to return to the previous activity, with a clear indication as to what they should do and how long it will last

# Questions?



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