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autism society of minnesota

Minnesota's First Autism Resource<sup>®</sup>

# **Understanding Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD):** Minneapolis Institute of Art

**Presented by:**

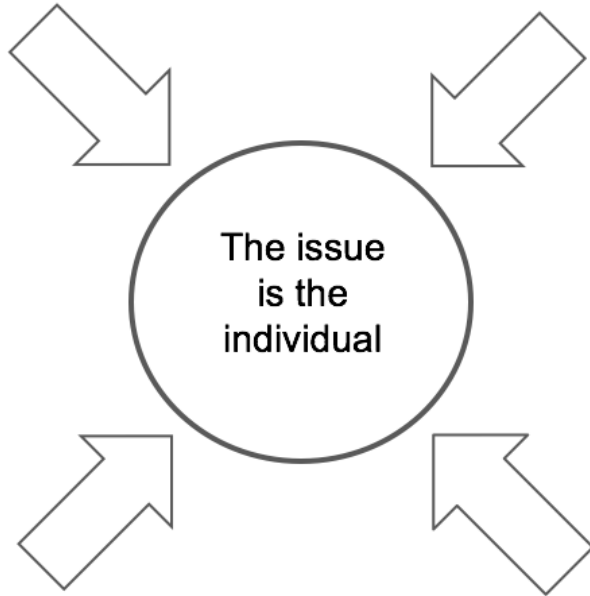
Eric Ringgenberg; M.A., B.S.



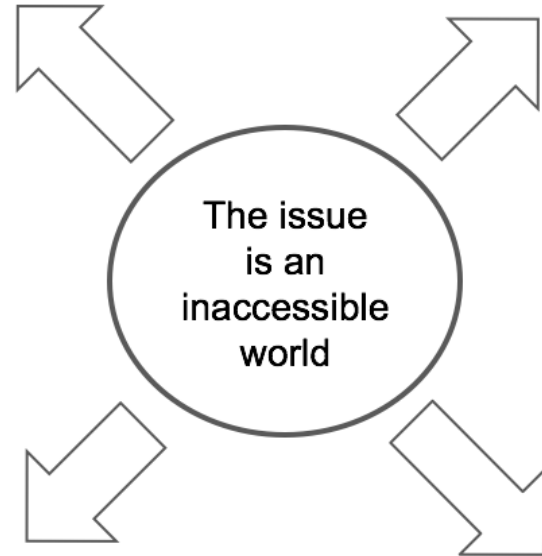
# Training Objectives

- Understand that Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a diverse condition that is a part of all communities
- Learn how ASD can impacts individuals in different ways
- Review ways you can provide support for autistic individuals

# What is a Disability?



Medical Model



Social Model

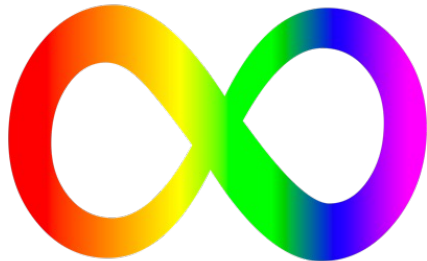
# What is a Disability?



When environmental supports meet personal characteristics,  
the outcome of disability is reduced

# Neurodiversity

- Neurological differences are to be recognized and respected as any other form of human variation
- Neurodiversity is a natural and valuable form of human diversity
- There is not a “normal” or “right” type of brain



# What is Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)?

- **Pervasive neurodevelopmental disorder**
  - Pervasive = affects all aspects of life
  - Neuro = brain
  - Developmental = lifelong
- **\*Not a disease or mental illness\***
- **Current Prevalence Estimates:**
  - 1 in 36 nationally
  - 1 in 34 in Minnesota
  - 4:1 male/female ratio\*



# What is Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)?

Autism is characterized by:

- Differences in **communication and socialization**
- The presence of **restricted, repetitive behaviors**

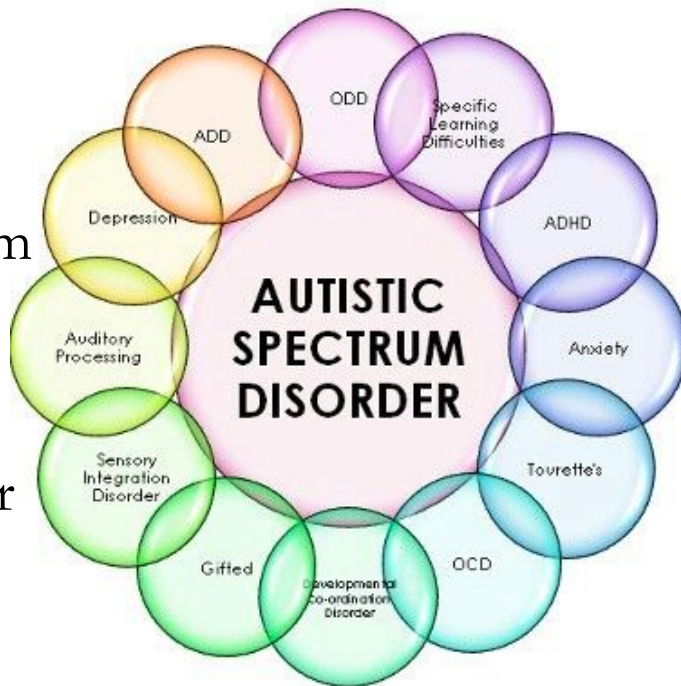
And is often accompanied by:

- Sensory processing differences
- Co-occurring physical and mental health issues
- Difficulty with executive function and emotional regulation
  - Executive function: organization, prioritizing, time-management, etc.
  - Emotional regulation: ability to manage own emotions and behavior



# Overlapping Conditions

- Intellectual Disability (ID)
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)
- Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

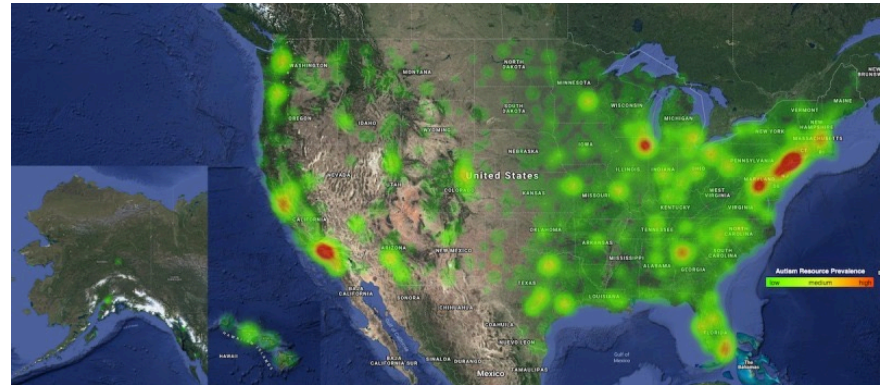


- Mental Health:
  - Anxiety
  - Depression
  - OCD
- Physical Health:
  - Epilepsy/Seizure
  - Gastro-intestinal
  - Sleep
  - Motor

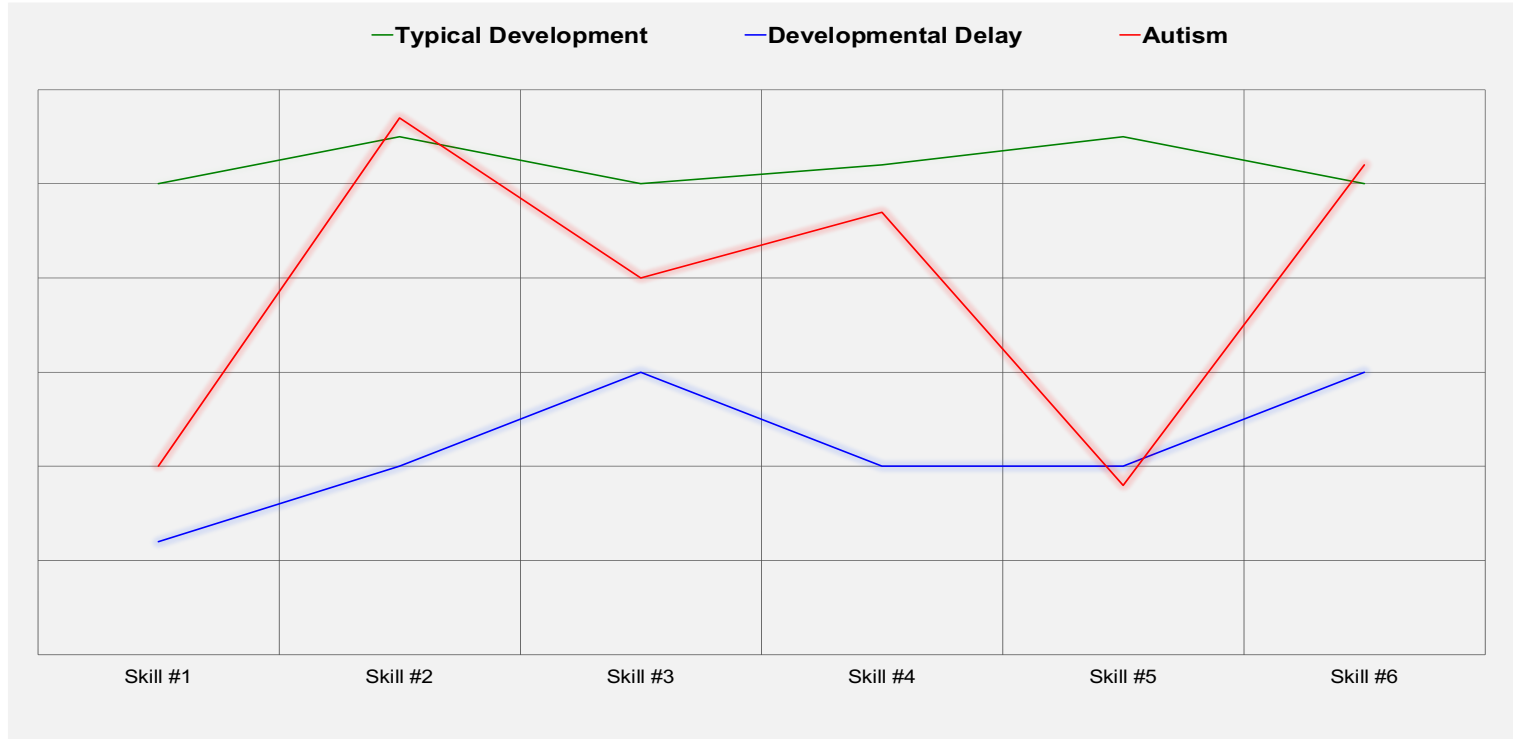


# ASD and Intersectionality

- Autism impacts all communities, locally and globally.
- While the prevalence of ASD is relatively consistent across communities, access to diagnosis and support services differs across socio-demographics and identities.
  - Geography
  - Age
  - Race/ethnicity
  - Socioeconomic status
  - Gender/Sexuality




# Patterns of Development





# Understanding ASD



**IF YOU'VE MET  
ONE PERSON  
WITH AUTISM, YOU'VE MET  
ONE PERSON  
WITH AUTISM.**

**-STEPHEN SHORE**

# Communication Differences

- Expressive
  - Speech Delay
  - Echolalia (scripting)
  - Prosody
- Receptive
  - Processing Delay
  - Literal Thinking





# Example: Literal Thinking

**This Door Must  
Remain Closed  
At All Times**

**Fire Marshall**

# Socialization Differences

- Reduced interest in socializing
- Reciprocity (give and take) in conversation
- Eye contact
- Social expression, affect
- Implicit social learning (unwritten rules/hidden curriculum of social norms)
  - Interpersonal boundaries
  - Public vs. private behavior



# Cognitive Flexibility Differences

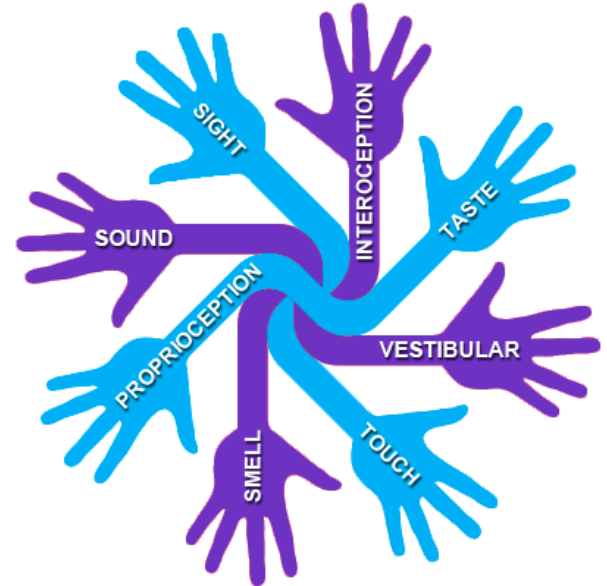
- Detail oriented hyper focus, deep knowledge of certain topics (high-interest areas)
- Difficulty multitasking and/or tolerating interruptions
- Greater dependence on structured directions/activities/environments
- Stricter adherence to routine or steps
- Increased difficulty adapting behavior to changes





# Sensory Perception

- **Hypersensitive** (too much) vs. **hyposensitive** (need more)
  - Tactile/Somatosensory System: touch
  - Visual System: sight
  - Auditory System: hearing
  - Gustatory System: taste
  - Olfactory System: smell
  - Vestibular System: balance
  - Proprioceptive System: body position
  - Interoceptive System: internal response



# Sensory Integration Challenges

- Difficulty filtering extraneous input
- Chaotic and/or unpredictable sensory input can be distressing
  - Other people – lines, crowds, etc.
  - May need breaks from sensory environment
  - May appear to have a lower frustration tolerance
  - May avoid these environments



# Strategy: Sensory Considerations

- Accommodate sensory sensitivities as requested
- Allow or provide sensory tools that can aid in focus and regulation
- Allow or provide breaks as needed, especially in prolonged sessions
- Designate space that can be used for sensory regulation purposes



# Strategy: Define Positive Expectations

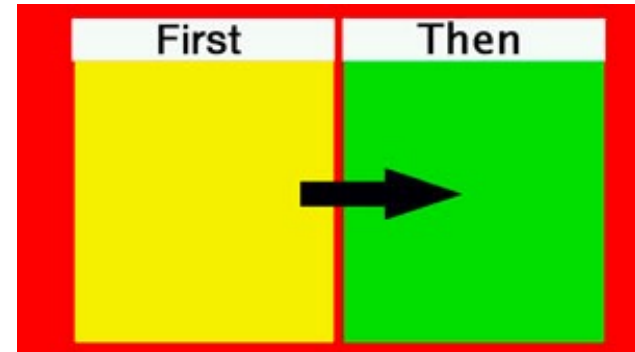
- What TO do, instead of what NOT to do
- Defined across settings and routines
  - Instruction
  - Modeling
  - Rehearsal
  - Feedback

*“Telling does  
not equal  
teaching”*



# Strategy: Adjusting Language and Interaction

- Use language that is simple, clear, and literal
- Allow for additional processing time
- Break tasks down into smaller steps
- Offer choices to promote decision making
- Use written or visual communication



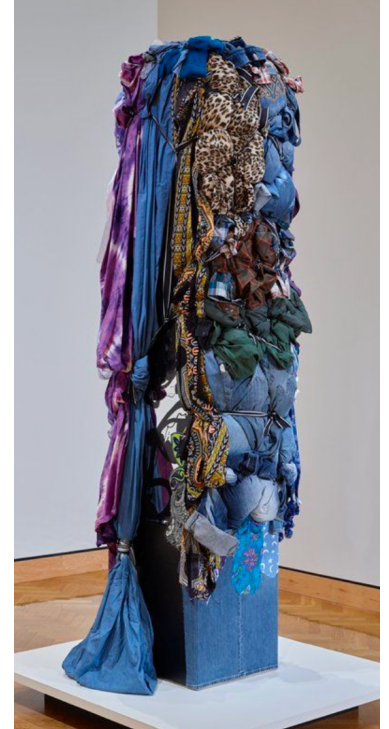
# Art Engagement Strategies

- Concrete vs. abstract
- Open-ended vs. close-ended
- Subjective vs. objective

# Art Engagement #1



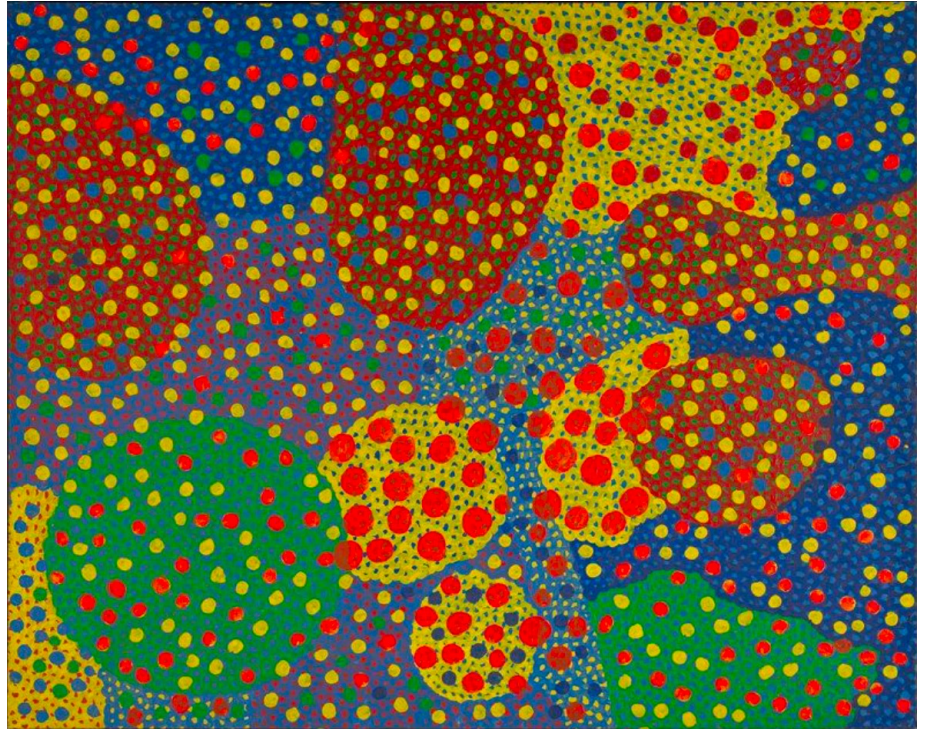
- Concrete vs. abstract
- Open-ended vs. close-ended
- Subjective vs. objective





# Art Engagement #2

- Concrete vs. abstract
- Open-ended vs. close-ended
- Subjective vs. objective





# Art Engagement #3



- Concrete vs. abstract
- Open-ended vs. close-ended
- Subjective vs. objective

# Strategy: Make It Visual

## 5-Point Scale (On the Job)

5	<b>Over the edge-</b> I'm ready to go off. I could lose my job at this point so I need to use my "help" card and ask my supervisor for assistance.
4	<b>Close to breaking point-</b> I can feel myself starting to lose control. I can leave and take a walk.
3	<b>Rumbling-</b> I'm feeling overwhelmed and having difficulty concentrating. I can ask my boss for a break.
2	<b>Uneasy-</b> I know something is not right. I can Self-Talk (Stay Calm!) and do deep breathing.
1	<b>Awesome-</b> I feel good and feel confident with doing my assigned tasks.

Adapted from Buron & Curtis, 2003

\_\_\_\_\_ Schedule

✓ Check when FINISHED

1.		<input type="checkbox"/>
2.		<input type="checkbox"/>
3.		<input type="checkbox"/>
4.		<input type="checkbox"/>
5.		<input type="checkbox"/>
6.		<input type="checkbox"/>



# Strategy: Task Analysis

- The process of breaking down a complex or “chained” behavioral skill into smaller components in order to teach a skill.
- Other practices can be used to facilitate learning of the smaller steps.
- Promoting independence.



# Social Narratives

- Social narratives are simple stories that visually represent social situations and appropriate social behaviors.
- The social narrative connects **the important details** of a setting or social situation to support a person in **understanding the social context** and in developing new social skills.
- Individualized to the person it is being written for
- Usually written from first-person perspective (I or proper noun)
- Combines text and pictures (visual support)



# Social Narratives

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Mia is proud to offer three Social Narratives designed for members of the neurodiverse community. Intended to increase comfort while visiting the museum, these illustrated documents are useful tools for anyone planning a trip to Mia. You'll find versions for guided school groups, families, and adults and teens. Each is available electronically and by request at Mia's Third Avenue entrance.

[Social Narrative for guided school groups](#)

[Social Narrative for families](#)

[Social Narrative for adults and teens](#)

[Sensory Friendly Spaces](#)

<https://new.artsmia.org/programs/tours/accessibility-and-specialized-tours/social-narratives>

# Being an Ally to Autistic Individuals

- Seek out information to better understand ASD and the lived experience of autistic individuals
- Acknowledge that being non-autistic influences your interpretation of autistic behavior
- Provide support and accommodation based on the individual's needs across settings
- Advocate for neurodiversity awareness and autism acceptance

# Scenario #1

- A visitor is confused about how to engage within the gallery spaces.

## Scenario #2

- A visitor is touching things that should not be touched.



## Scenario #3

- A visitor is becoming overwhelmed and distressed.

# Resources

- Spectrum News:
  - [spectrumnews.org](https://spectrumnews.org)
- ASD Modules:
  - [afirm.fpg.unc.edu/afirm-modules](https://afirm.fpg.unc.edu/afirm-modules)
  - [autisminternetmodules.org](https://autisminternetmodules.org)
- Job Accommodation Network (JAN)
  - [askjan.org](https://askjan.org)
- Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN): [autisticadvocacy.org](https://autisticadvocacy.org)
- Autistic Women & Nonbinary Network: [awnnetwork.org](https://awnnetwork.org)
- Lydia X. Z. Brown: [autistichoya.net](https://autistichoya.net)
- Stephen Shore: [researchautism.org](https://researchautism.org)



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**Web site:** [www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org)

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*Established in 1971, the Autism Society of Minnesota is committed to education, advocacy and support designed to enhance the lives of those affected by autism from birth through retirement.*

*The Autism Society of Minnesota is a 501(c)(3) organization.*