

GroupProjects

INTERACTIVE MONTHLY WEBINAR SERIES

CampusSafety
CONFERENCE CSC

Interacting with Students with Autism: Tips and Strategies for Law Enforcement and Security Professionals



Sergeant Stefan Bjes

Founder and CEO, Blue Line Spectrum Safety

The Why.....

Mr. Hayden

I was recently inspired to reach out the police department by a video (see below) I watched that was posted by a police officer who is also the father of an autistic son. I very eloquently expressed concerns of parents of special needs children (like myself). I'm not going to lie; I lose sleep over the thought of a misunderstanding of my child's behavior or lack to respond appropriately which could lead to an unfortunate incident for everyone.

I would like to see if we can make things better in our community. While I'm sure that our force has received some training in this area, it would give some piece of mind to many of us to get to know our police team better and have an opportunity to network and introduce our families to each other so that should we ever need to contact our local police for any reason, we would feel more comfortable and not hesitate. Perhaps there is a way to register our kids with some photos and basic information to be held on file for reference in case of emergency. Just a few thoughts. Is there any interest in starting such a program? I beg you to watch the video below so you can understand the frame of mind that has led me to reaching out. Thanks.

Question

What training does your agency offer regarding people with autism/disabilities?

What training would be helpful?

What stops agencies from providing this training?

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graph TD; A[Autism- "State of being alone, cut off, isolated"] --> B[Autism is a complex neurodevelopmental disorder that has no known cause or cure]; B --> C[It is part of a group of disorders known as Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)]; C --> D[Autism affects the normal brain development in the areas of social interaction, communication, repetitive behaviors and difficulty adjusting to change. (DSM-5 Manual)];
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Autism- "State of being alone, cut off, isolated"

Autism is a complex neurodevelopmental disorder that has no known cause or cure

It is part of a group of disorders known as Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)

Autism affects the normal brain development in the areas of social interaction, communication, repetitive behaviors and difficulty adjusting to change. (DSM-5 Manual)

This Photo by Unknown Author is
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Question

Have you had interactions with a person with autism or another disability?

Personally?

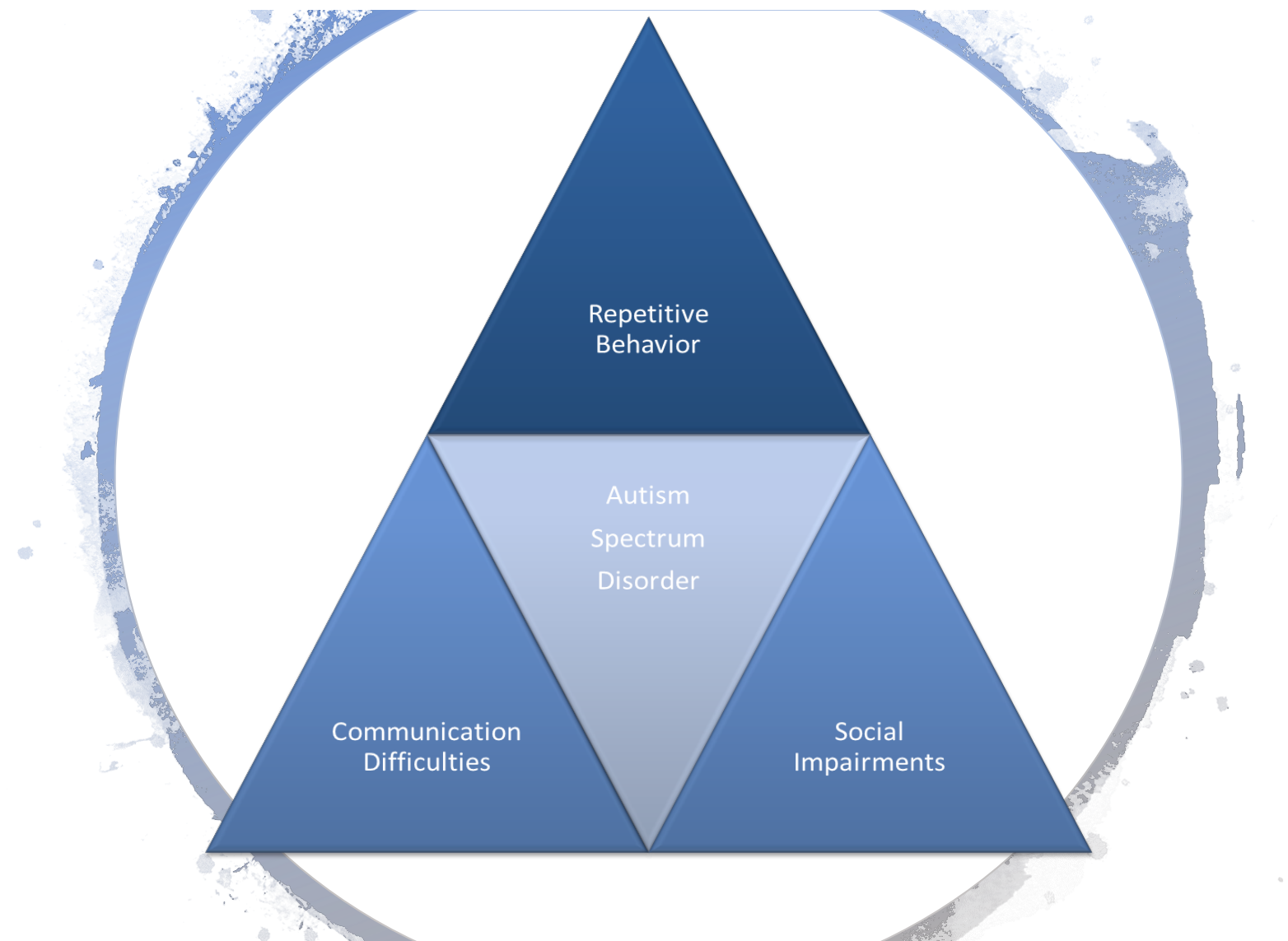
During your performance of your duties?

Reflection

Reflect on something that happened within your agency during an interaction with a person with autism or a disability.

What did you do well?

What could you have done differently?



Question

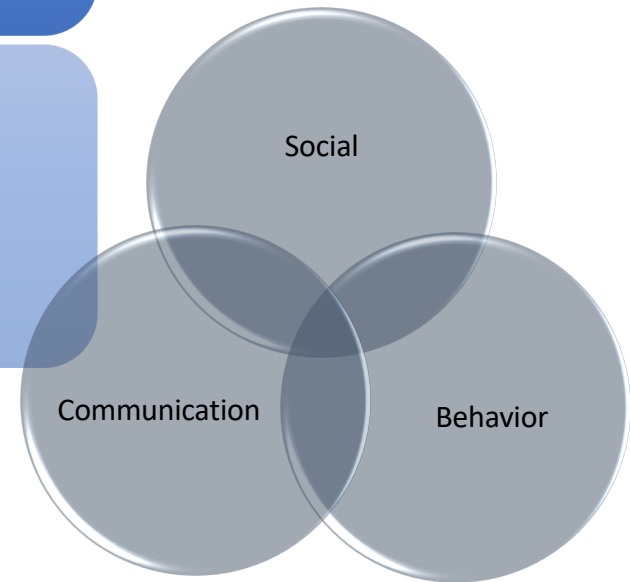
How do you know when you encounter someone that they have Autism or another disability?

What characteristics did they display?

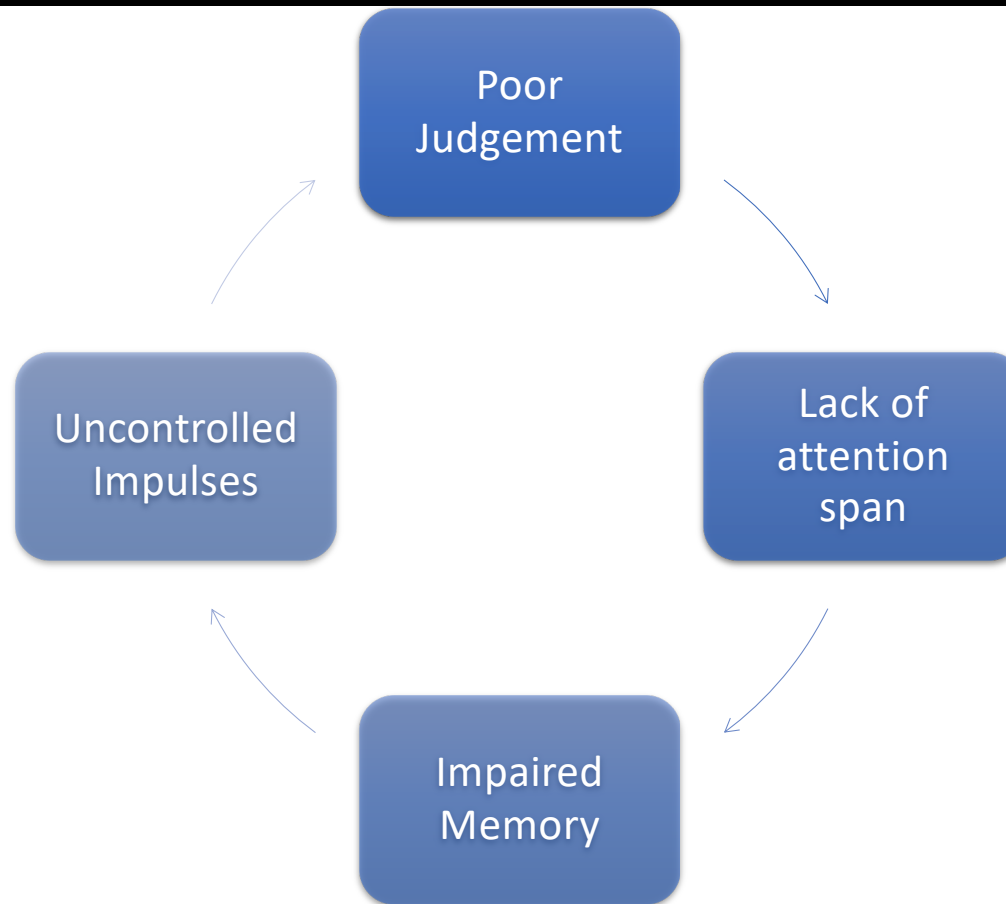
What is Autism?

Individuals with Autism may often have unusual responses to sensory experiences, such as certain sounds or the way an object looks (Hyper-sensitivity or Hypo (under) Sensitivity)

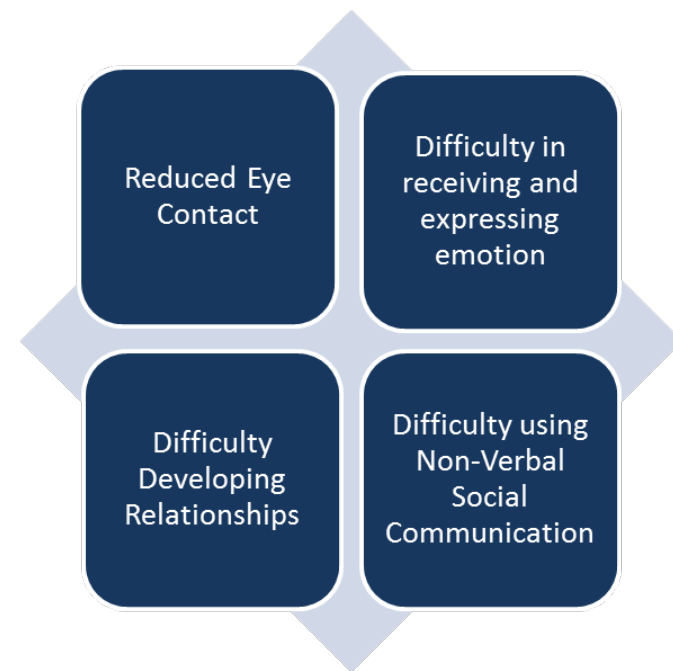
Considered a “Hidden Disability” Autism may not be physically obvious. You cannot just look at someone and know that they have it.



Cognitive Challenges with Autism



Social Interaction



Stimming Examples

Visual

- Staring at lights, repetitive blinking, moving fingers in front of the eyes, hand-flapping

Auditory

- Tapping ears, snapping fingers, making vocal sounds, humming

Tactile

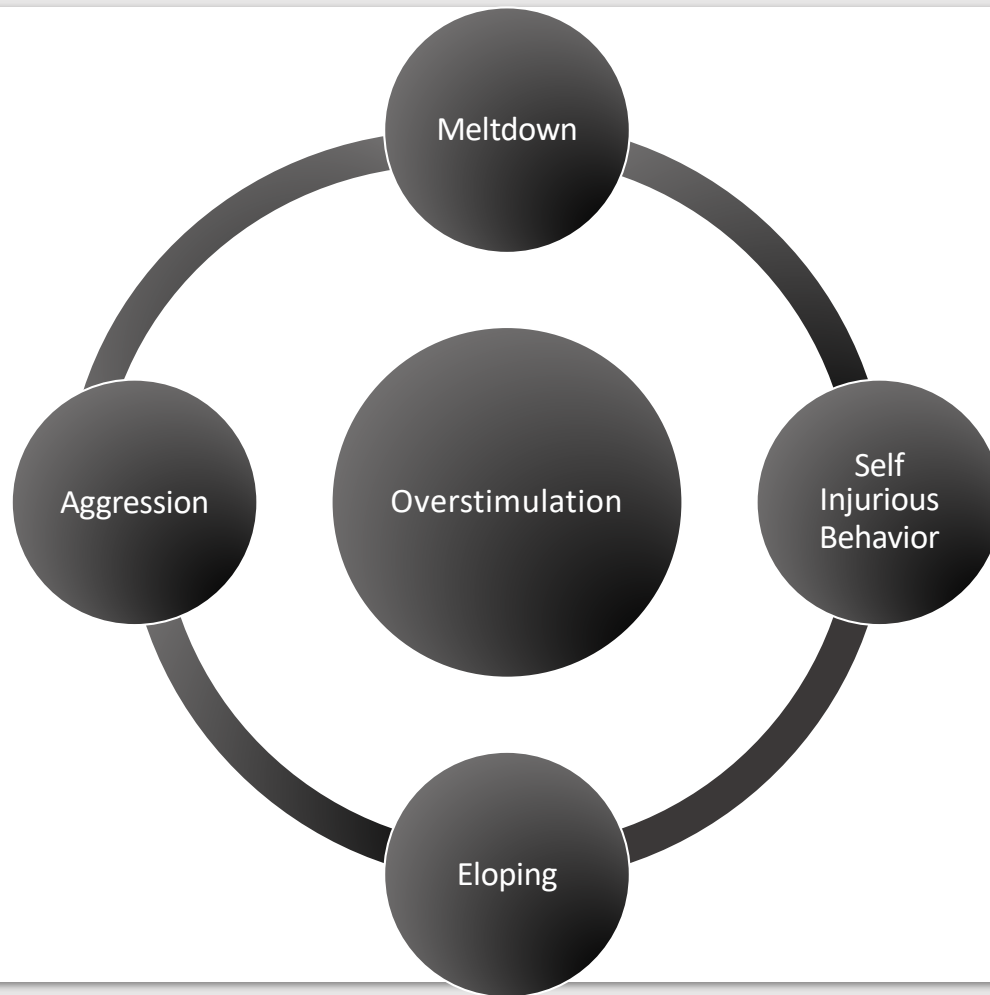
- Rubbing the skin with one's hands or with another object, scratching
- Vestibular (sense of balance) rocking front to back, rocking side-to-side

Taste

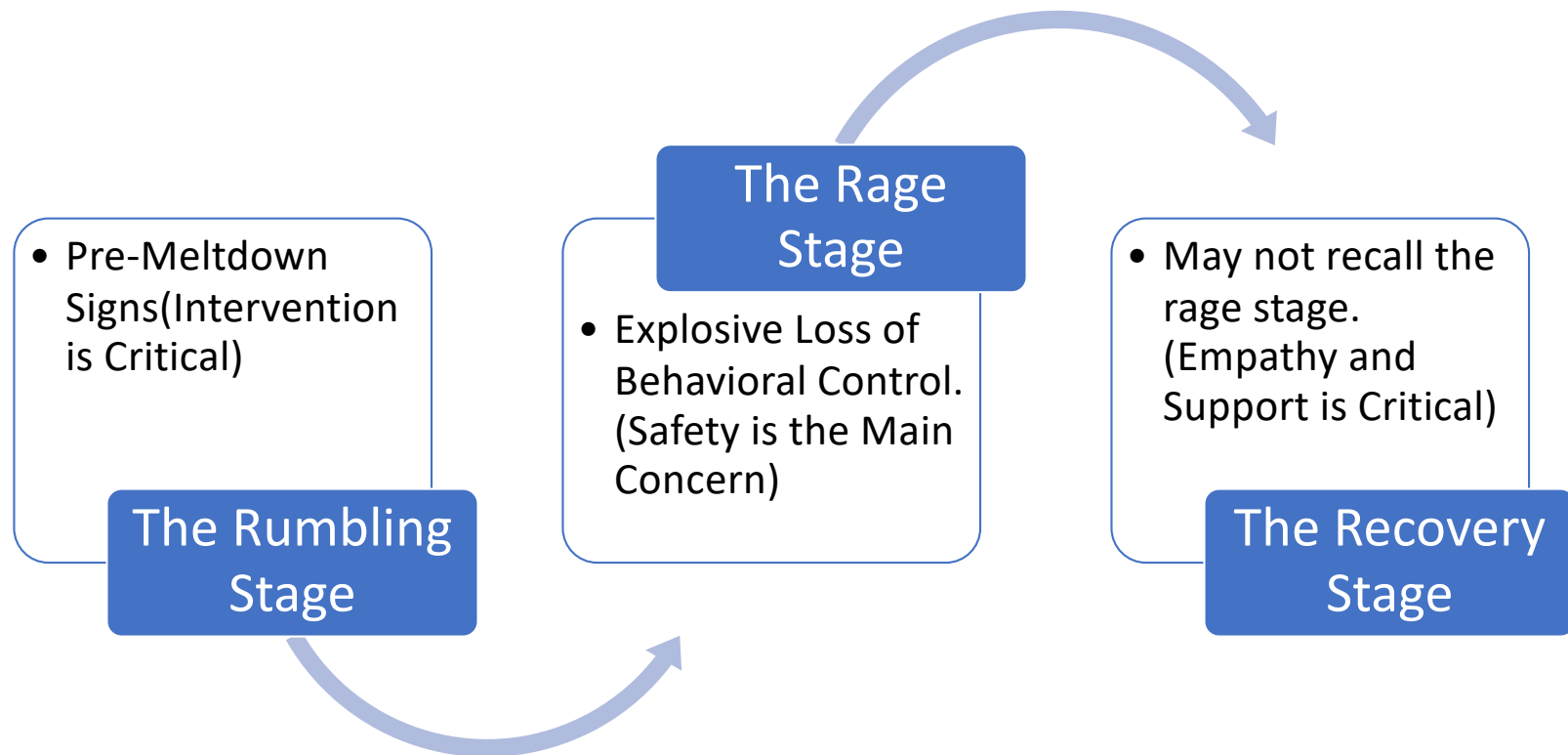
- Placing body parts or objects in one's mouth, licking objects

Smell

- Smelling objects, sniffing people.



Stages of a Meltdown



Scenario

You are observing self-abusive, aggressive behavior toward others, or escalated “meltdown” behavior in a classroom.

How do you handle this?

Morning Mix

A 7-year-old with autism was handcuffed by a school resource officer and pinned to the ground, video shows

Worcester police officers handcuffed 10-year-old boy with autism, fracturing his arm, lawsuit alleges

By **Gal Tziperman Lotan** Globe Staff, Updated September 25, 2020, 7:49 p.m.



Colorado school resource officers handcuffed, jailed 11-year-old with autism for scratching classmate, lawsuit says

Parents had to post \$25,000 bond for boy's release after arrested by Douglas County sheriff's deputies



De-Escalation/Reactions to the Police

Defensively Striking Out (This is Communication)

Running Away

Grabbing for Officer's Equipment

Unresponsiveness to Commands

De-Escalation/Reactions to the Police

Interaction may become frantic and challenging

Do not take it personal

Remind yourself that ASD is the cause of the challenging behavior

De-Escalation/Reactions from the Police

ASD calls can be time consuming.

Knowing this can fend off
frustration

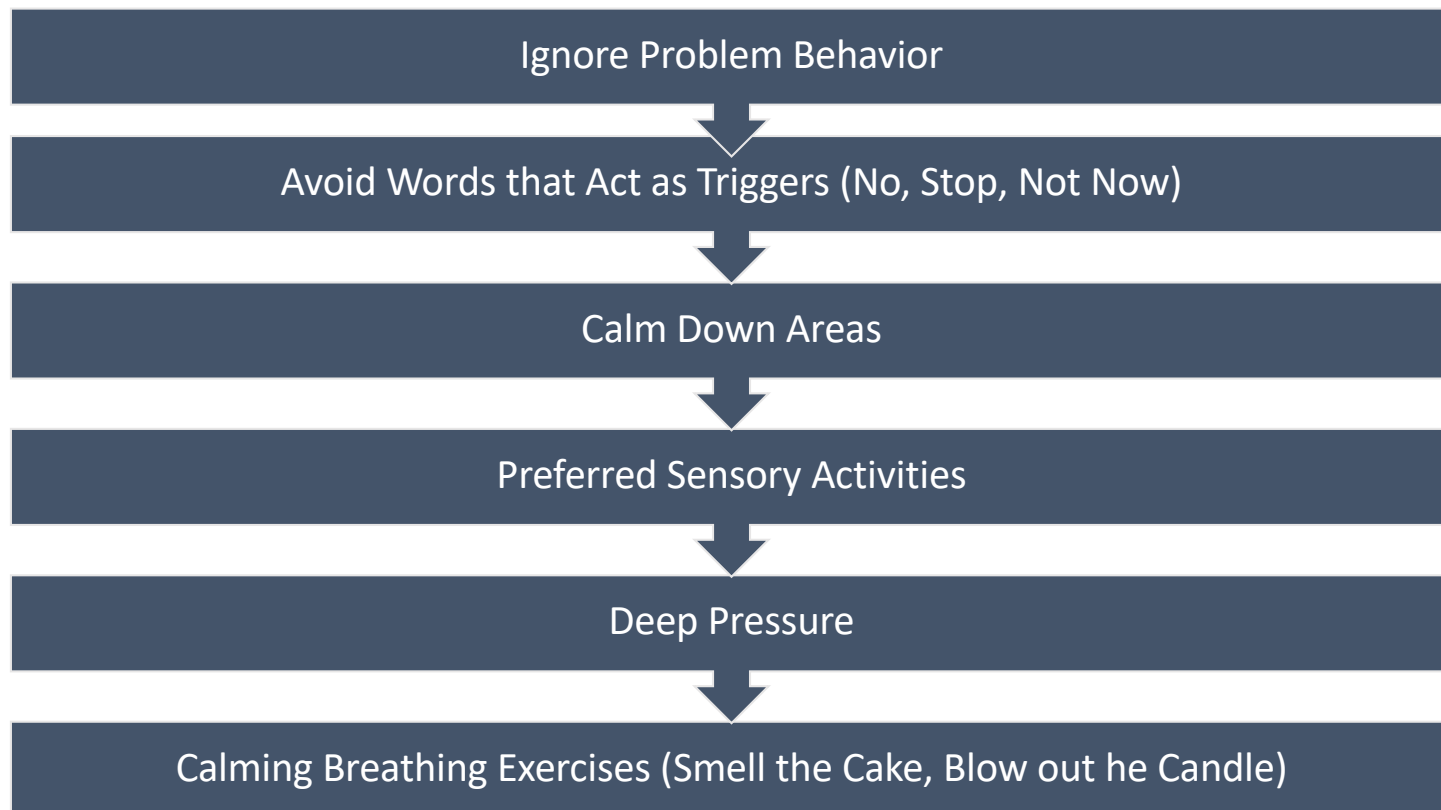
Don't expect well-mannered
obedience

Calming Strategies

- Do you have access to student's IEP (Individualized Education Plan or BIP (Behavior Improvement Plan))?
- Do you utilize Teachers/ Paraprofessionals for Strategies?



Calming Strategies

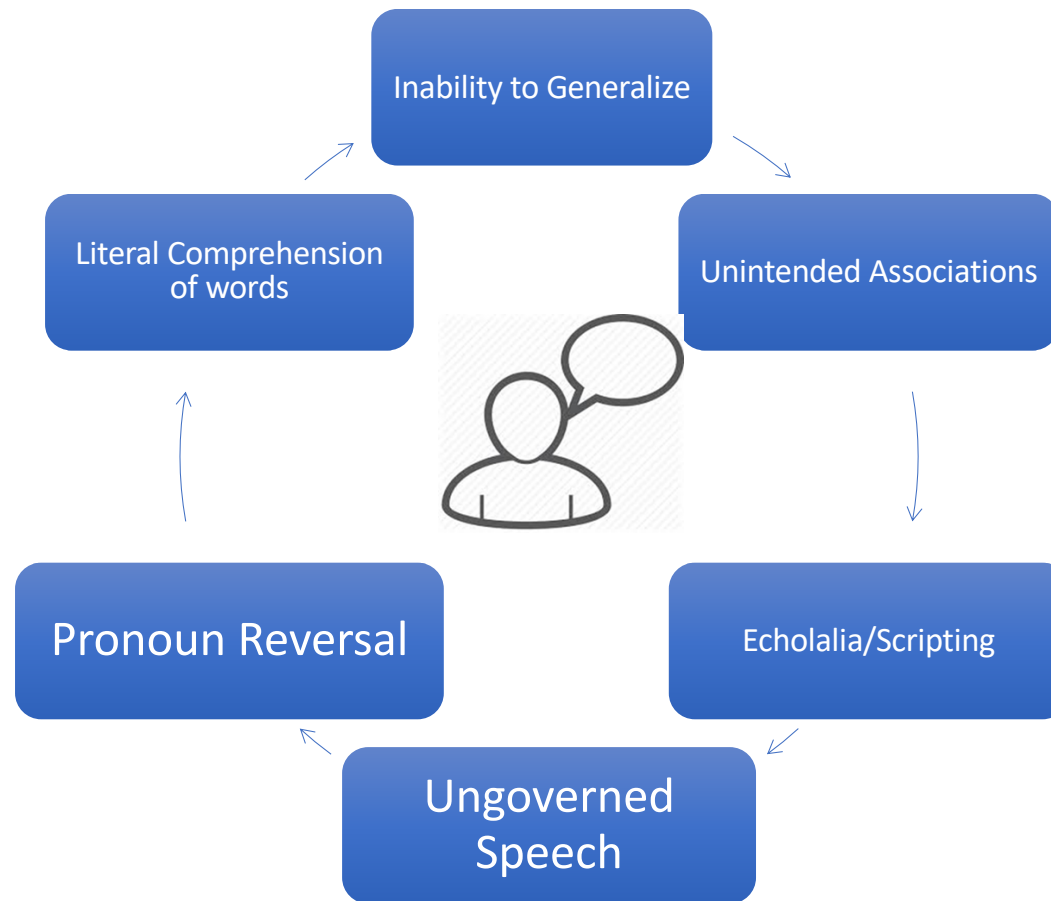


Question

How long do you normally give someone to respond to a question or command?

Does this change when the person has a disability?

Patterns of Communication



Language

Speak Clearly
and Concisely

Check for
Understanding

Repeat or
Rephrase

One person
talks at a time

No Slang or
Abstract
Language

Speak in a
calm, quiet
voice

One Command
at a Time

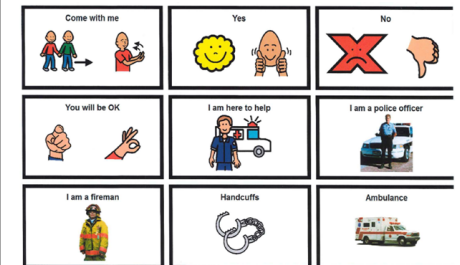
Give Extra
Response Time



First

Then

Praise



Alternative Communication

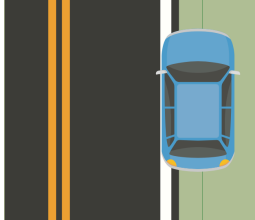
Social Stories

Traffic Stop, Part 1: What to Expect

If I don't follow a traffic law, I may be stopped by the police.



This is how I will know I should pull my car to the side of the road.



This might be driving over the speed limit or driving through a red light.



When I see the police car lights behind me and/or hear sirens, I should safely and quickly pull my car to the side of the road.



The police officer will turn on the lights and siren of the patrol car.

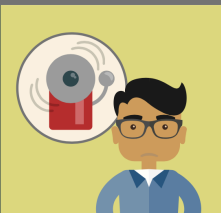


When the police officer walks up to my car, I should put my window down and keep my hands on the steering wheel.



When to Call 911: Part 2

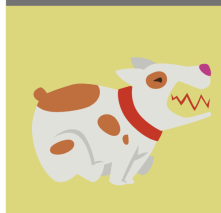
I should only call 911 when there is an emergency.



I should not call 911 if I have a cold or flu.



I should not call 911 if there is a loud party or a dog barking.



I should only call 911 if an injury is severe.



I should not call 911 if there is a power outage.



If I am not sure if it's really an emergency, I can ask the 911 operator.



Question

A student with Autism, who is known to wander/bolt, is missing from the building. What is your response?

Wandering/Elopement

Wandering by people with Autism is common (50%)

Accidental drowning accounts for 91% of lethal outcomes

Other danger: dehydration, heat stroke, hypothermia, encounters with strangers

Three Types of Wandering

- Goal Directed
- Bolting/Fleeing
- Wandering

The theory is that there are multiple triggers that can cause wandering



First Responder Response to Wandering/Elopement

Are they dressed
appropriately for
the weather?

How do they
communicate?

Critical
Details

Do they
understand
danger?

Will they
understand that
they are lost?



What do they
love?

What do they
hate?


Questions
to Ask

What was the
plan?

Did something
new happen?



Question



Do you know what resources your department has that you can utilize when time of the essence?

Additional Resources



Sensory Kits



Window Cling



Seat Beat Covers

Resources for families

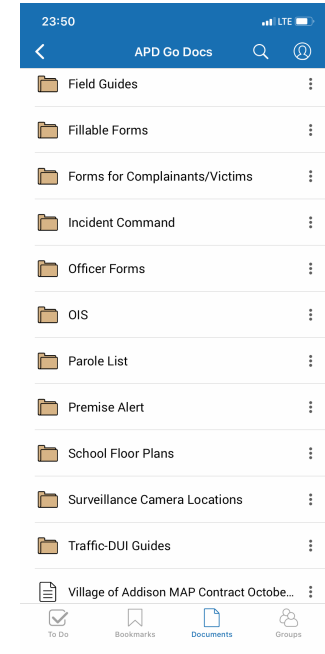
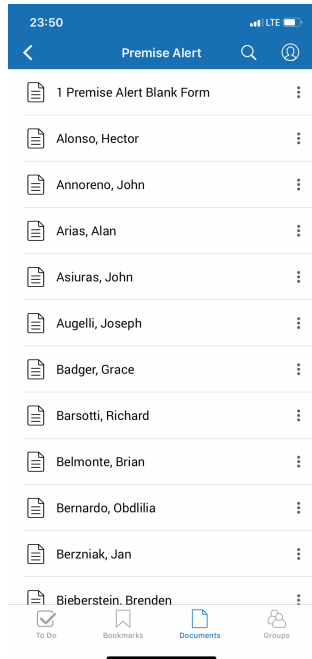
Special Needs
Registry

911 Script

Neighbor
Letter

Autism
Identifiers

Safety Plan



Programs

Programs

Special Needs Resource Fair
with School District

“Meet and Greet”

Parent Training

Closure



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The logo for GroupProjects, with 'Group' in blue and 'Projects' in red, is enclosed within a blue speech bubble outline.

GroupProjects

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Thank you for attending!

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