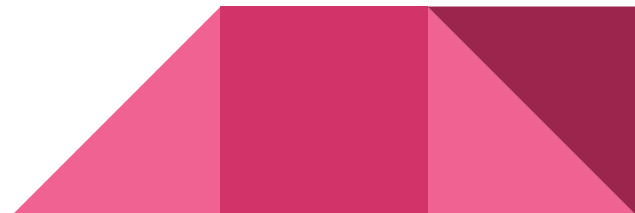


Uniquely Human: Reframing and relanguaging ASD.

Lynn Adams, PhD, CCC-SLP
Moore Pediatric Therapy Services
Troy, NC

Uniquely human

- ❖ Behavior patterns/reactions of children with ASD have been misunderstood
- ❖ Deep interests and strengths get described as obsessions and perseverations and are targets of reduction or elimination
- ❖ A behavioral perspective in treatment predominates but we must balance this with a developmental, person-centered perspective
- ❖ The movement is to embrace the ASD and not view the diagnosis as a tragedy
 - Its is not a tragedy, but let's not diminish the impact on the family
 - TV ads about ASD tend to over simplify the impact of ASD on everyone




Understanding the behavior associated with ASD

- ❖ Autism is a shared human experience.
 - It is not just the child. ASD impacts everyone.
 - Parents
 - Siblings
 - Extended family
 - Classmates
 - Neighbors
- ❖ Parents need support, training, patience



Words used to describe behaviors

- ❖ Non-compliant/stubborn
 - ❖ Manipulative
 - ❖ Non-communicative
 - ❖ Obsessive
 - ❖ Non-functional
 - ❖ Perseverative
- 

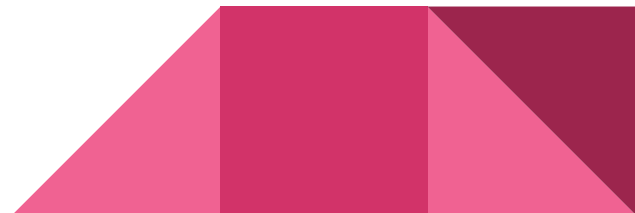
Consequences of not understanding behaviors

- ❖ Little need to understand behavior, just categorize as desirable or undesirable
- ❖ The student is the only one who needs to change
- ❖ If other children don't understand the behavior, there is an increased risk of bullying.
 - Children with ASD suffer very high rates of bullying in schools and community settings (park, playground, pool etc.)



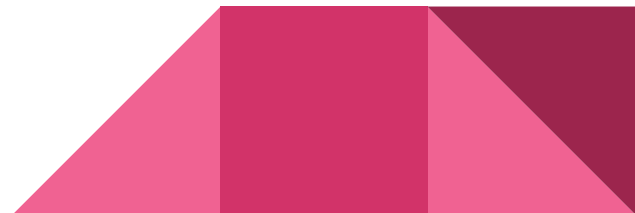
What do we know about behaviors

- ❖ Research and clinical experience tells us that there is no such thing as an autism behavior, but rather all behaviors are HUMAN behaviors
- ❖ Behavior patterns may be best described as:
 - Reactions to confusion, stress and anxiety
 - Are often attempts to communicate and cope
- ❖ We must ask WHY?
 - What is this behavior doing for the child?
 - Does this behavior need to change?
 - Are you sure?



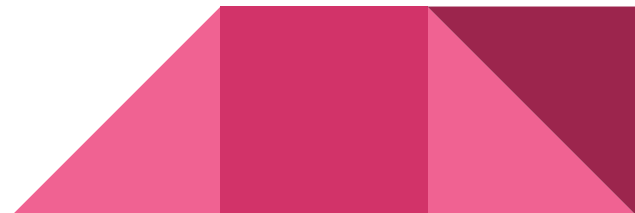
Steps to make things BETTER

- ❖ Build understanding
 - Rethink function of echolalia, inflexibility and obsessive interests
- ❖ Respond with compassion
 - Ask the child why they do what they do if possible
 - Try to gain their perspective
- ❖ Express appreciation
 - Acknowledge what is going right
 - Acknowledge how hard it might be for the child
- ❖ Provide support
 - Interpersonal and learning support



Get in touch with your own human behaviors

- ❖ Are you routine driven? Like things to go a certain way?
- ❖ Sensory issues?
 - Movements
 - Sounds
 - Sights
 - Tastes
 - Smells
 - Clothing
- ❖ Fascinations?
- ❖ Interpersonal communication?



Questions?

Thanks you for your time and attention!!

