



Social Communication Strategies for Students with ASD Meeting the Needs 2017

Leanne Forrest

Case Manager, OCDSB ASD Team

Michelle MacIsaac

OCDSB Speech-Language Pathologist

Julia Sneyd

OCDSB Itinerant Teacher of Autism



Today's Objectives

Introduce a framework (PROS) for digging deeper in solving problems related to social communication by:

- a. identifying student strengths;
- b. examining reasons (root causes) and obstacles (lagging skills) in order to better understand school behaviours;
- c. selecting appropriate intervention strategies

Social communication deficits (3 of 3 criteria must be met)	Restricted, repetitive patterns of behaviour, interests or activities (2 of 4 criteria must be met)	Level of Severity	Symptoms exist in early childhood	Symptoms impair functioning	Impairments are not better explained by Intellectual disability or global developmental delay
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
<p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <p>Deficits in social -emotional reciprocity (social approach, back-and-forth sharing of interests/emotions/affect, response in social interactions)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2</p> <p>Deficits in nonverbal communicative behaviours used for social interaction (eye contact, gestures, facial expression, integration of verbal and nonverbal communication)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <p>Deficits in relationship--building (adjusting behaviour making friends, interest in peers)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <p>Stereotyped or repetitive motor movements</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2</p> <p>inflexible adherence to routines, ritualized patterns of verbal or nonverbal behaviour (transitions, rigid thinking, greeting, routines)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <p>Highly restricted, fixated interests that are abnormal in intensity or focus (preoccupation, perseveration)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">4</p> <p>Hyper- or hyporeactivity sensory input or unusual interests in sensory aspects of the environment (pain/temperature, textures, lights, movement)</p>	<p><u>Level 3:</u> "Requiring very substantial support" (severe impairment in functioning)</p> <p><u>Level 2:</u> "Requiring substantial support" (marked deficits even with supports in place)</p> <p><u>Level 1:</u> "Requiring support" (noticeable deficits without supports in place)</p>	<p>Present in the early developmental period</p>	<p>Impaired functioning in the areas of social, occupational, or other important areas of current functioning</p>	<p>ASD and intellectual disability frequently co - occur; combined diagnoses rely on social communication below that expected for general developmental level. A diagnosis must specify "with or without accompanying intellectual impairment."</p>

Autism is a neurobiological disorder with deficits in social communication...

Deficits in:

- social emotional reciprocity (social interaction)
- non verbal communicative behaviours
- relationship building

Also: restrictive, repetitive, patterns of behaviour interests or activities (includes: stereotyped motor movement, ritualized patterns of verbal and nonverbal behaviour, restricted fixated interests, hyper or hyporeactivity to sensory input)

Strengths in:

- following routines, honesty, adhering to rules, special interests

Observation	Description	How can this be viewed as a strength?	What does it lead to?
social isolation and intense focus on topics of interest (professor)	extremely knowledgeable about areas of particular interest	true expert in an adult, leading to a successful career.	
exceptional logical or mathematical abilities	the affinity of many autistic people for computers, software, and video games is well known.	career path in the future	
experience the world differently		will approach problem-solving in unique ways when compared to the general population	

Children do
well if they

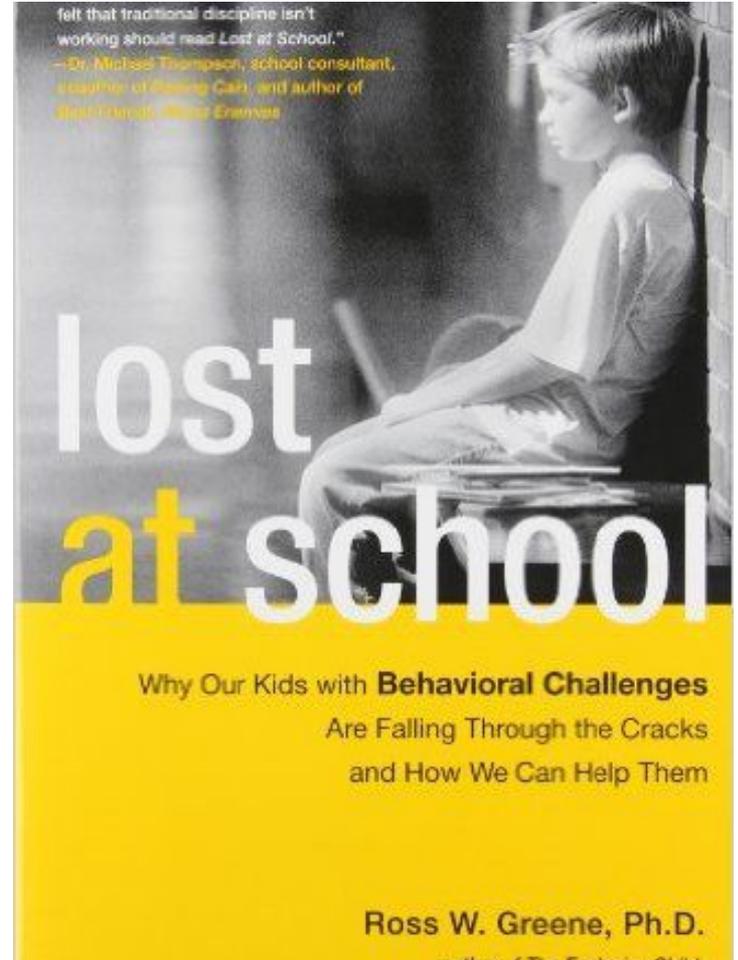
CAN

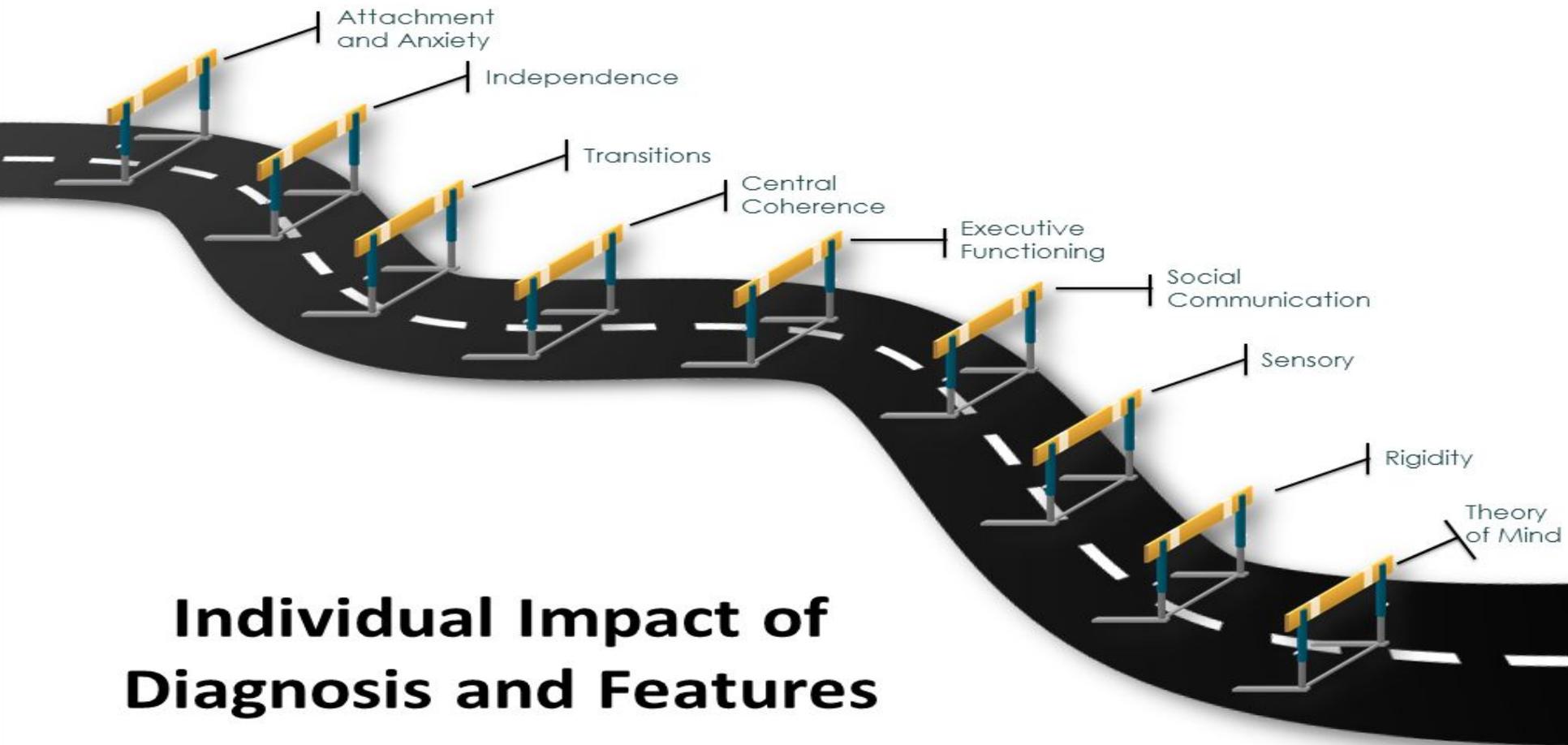
- Ross W. Greene

What do you think?

In his book *Lost at School*, Ross Greene encourages educators to consider their philosophy on children and behaviour. In the introduction to his book he explores two different understandings:

- Kids will do well if they want to
- Kids will do well if they can





Individual Impact of Diagnosis and Features

PROBLEM / AREA OF NEED:

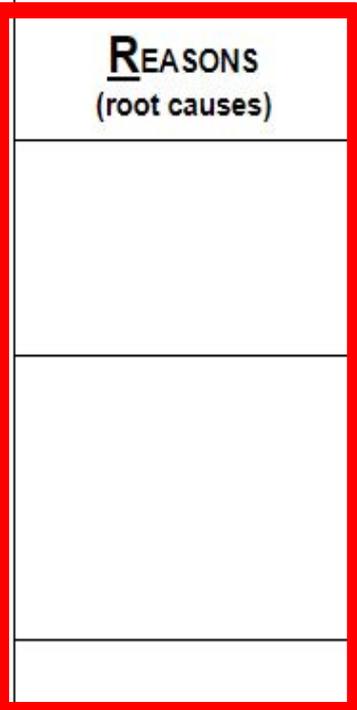
WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE IN THIS STUDENT?

STUDENT STRENGTHS TO BUILD ON:

REASONS
(root causes)

OBSTACLES
(lagging skills)

SUGGESTED STRATEGIES THAT CAPITALIZE ON STUDENT STRENGTHS



PROBLEM / AREA OF NEED:

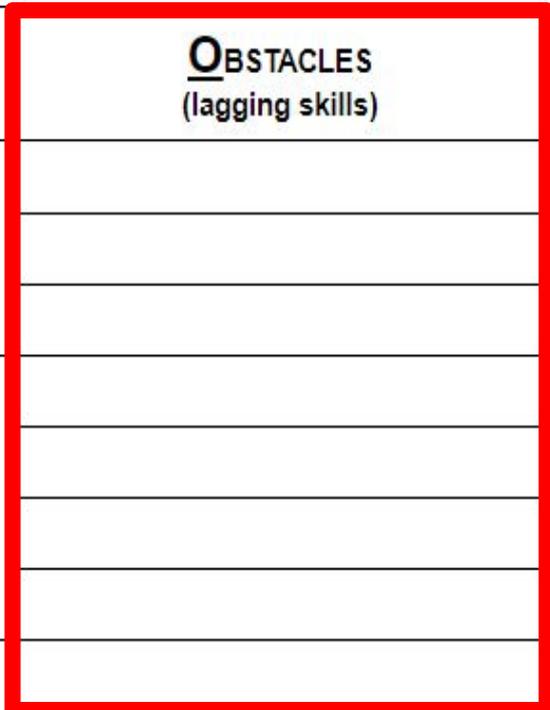
WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE IN THIS STUDENT?

STUDENT STRENGTHS TO BUILD ON:

REASONS
(root causes)

OBSTACLES
(lagging skills)

SUGGESTED STRATEGIES THAT CAPITALIZE ON STUDENT STRENGTHS



**PROBLEM / AREA OF NEED:
SOCIAL COMMUNICATION**

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE IN THIS STUDENT? (observable behaviour)

STUDENT STRENGTHS TO BUILD ON:

<u>R</u>EASONS (Root Causes)	<u>O</u>BSTACLES (Lagging skills)	<u>S</u>UGGESTED <u>S</u>TRATEGIES THAT CAPITALIZE ON STUDENT STRENGTHS
Difficulty with the back-and-forth flow of communication that is necessary to achieve the goal of successful social interaction (social-emotional reciprocity)		

**PROBLEM / AREA OF NEED:
SOCIAL COMMUNICATION**

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE IN THIS STUDENT? (observable behaviour)

STUDENT STRENGTHS TO BUILD ON:

<u>R</u>EASONS (Root Causes)	<u>O</u>BSTACLES (Lagging skills)	<u>S</u>UGGESTED <u>S</u>TRATEGIES THAT CAPITALIZE ON STUDENT STRENGTHS
Difficulty with the back-and-forth flow of communication that is necessary to achieve the goal of successful social interaction (social-emotional reciprocity)	Difficulty sharing emotion and affect with conversational partner	
	Cannot sustain the back-and-forth nature of conversations	
	Has difficulty making connections (common interests) with conversational partners	
	Difficulty engaging in social interactions	
	Difficulty initiating social interactions	
	Difficulty terminating social interactions	
	Delayed processing time	

**PROBLEM / AREA OF NEED:
SOCIAL COMMUNICATION**

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE IN THIS STUDENT? (observable behaviour)

STUDENT STRENGTHS TO BUILD ON:

<u>R</u>EASONS (Root Causes)	<u>O</u>BSTACLES (Lagging skills)	<u>S</u>UGGESTED <u>S</u>TRATEGIES THAT CAPITALIZE ON STUDENT STRENGTHS
Difficulty understanding and using nonverbal communicative behaviours necessary for successful social interactions		

**PROBLEM / AREA OF NEED:
SOCIAL COMMUNICATION**

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE IN THIS STUDENT? (observable behaviour)

STUDENT STRENGTHS TO BUILD ON:

<u>R</u>EASONS (Root Causes)	<u>O</u>BSTACLES (Lagging skills)	<u>S</u>UGGESTED <u>S</u>TRATEGIES THAT CAPITALIZE ON STUDENT STRENGTHS
Difficulty understanding and using nonverbal communicative behaviours necessary for successful social interactions	Difficulty understanding and using body language	
	Difficulty understanding and using figurative language	
	Difficulty expressing or interpreting emotions through facial expression or gestures even though strong emotions may be inside them	
	Difficulty differentiating one's own emotions from the emotions of others	
	Difficulty orienting to people in a social situation	

**PROBLEM / AREA OF NEED:
SOCIAL COMMUNICATION**

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE IN THIS STUDENT? (observable behaviour)

STUDENT STRENGTHS TO BUILD ON:

<u>R</u>EASONS (Root Causes)	<u>O</u>BSTACLES (Lagging skills)	<u>S</u>UGGESTED <u>S</u>TRATEGIES THAT CAPITALIZE ON STUDENT STRENGTHS
Difficulty developing, maintaining, and understanding relationships that are appropriate to developmental level (beyond those with caregivers)		

**PROBLEM / AREA OF NEED:
SOCIAL COMMUNICATION**

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE IN THIS STUDENT? (observable behaviour)

STUDENT STRENGTHS TO BUILD ON:

<u>R</u>EASONS (Root Causes)	<u>O</u>BSTACLES (Lagging skills)	<u>S</u>UGGESTED <u>S</u>TRATEGIES THAT CAPITALIZE ON STUDENT STRENGTHS
Difficulty developing, maintaining, and understanding relationships that are appropriate to developmental level (beyond those with caregivers)	Difficulty adjusting behaviour to fit the social context	
	Cannot share in imaginative play	
	Difficulty making friends	
	Is not interested in peers	
	Misunderstands the expectations of friendship	

Reasons, Obstacles and Behaviours: Small Group Activity

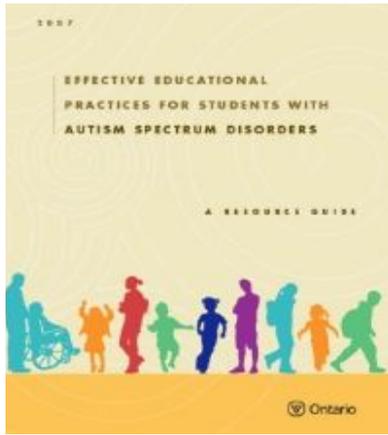


Digging Deeper: Questions to consider when thinking about obstacles:

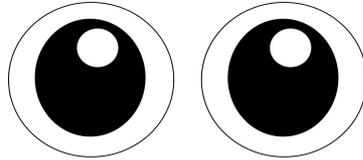
1. What is the presenting concern?
2. What would cause the student to think/act that way?
3. **What skills do you think the student lacks that other students the same age understand and use?**
4. What is keeping the student from learning these skills?
5. What should we concentrate on first?

Using the Framework: Our Example

Ahmed is a grade 6 student with a diagnosis of ADHD, Autism Spectrum Disorder (Level 1) and anxiety. Gym class has become a problem because he screams insults at his teacher and classmates the whole time. For example, “Gym is for morons!” and “You must have been hit in the head too many times!” Eventually, he must be removed from the class before a classmate hits him, and in order for others to continue learning undisturbed. Often, the principal comes to the gym to convince Ahmed to come to his office. While in the office, he reads a book and gets to use the iPad. The teacher is concerned because she will not be able to give Ahmed a mark for physical education on his report card.



Setting Goals



S.M.A.R.T. GOALS

S - Specific

M - Measurable

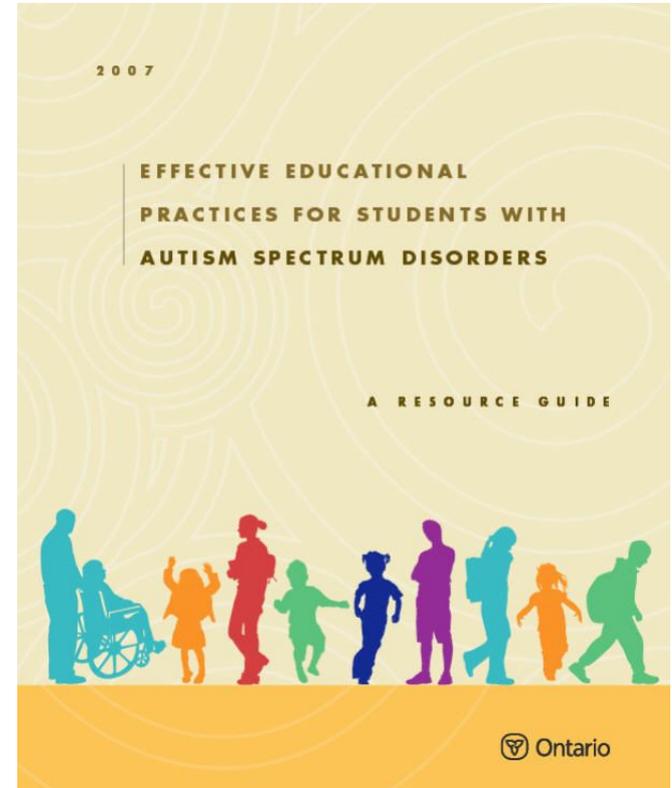
A - Achievable

R - Relevant

T - Timed

Behaviour is Communication

“Behaviours have a communicative function. Managing the behaviour of students with ASD requires that we recognize and address the message behind behaviour.”



EVERY GROUP PROJECT



DOES 99%
OF THE WORK

HAS NO
IDEA WHAT'S
GOING ON THE
WHOLE TIME

SAYS HE'S
GOING TO
HELP BUT
HE'S NOT

DISAPPEAR
AT THE VERY
BEGINNING AND
DOESN'T SHOW
UP AGAIN TIL
THE VERY END

IN SCHOOL YOU HAVE EVER DONE