

What do we know about Good Practice in Intervention for People with Autism?

D.S.W. Feb. 2018

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Welcome and Overview

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**Autism Centre of Excellence
Programs and Courses**

Aims and Focus of Autism Centre of Excellence (ACE)



- Central focus is improvement in the quality of life of children and adults with autism by
 - supporting learning for people with autism across their life span
 - opening doors of opportunity – from early childhood, to further education and employment.
- This is achieved by:
 - Sharing knowledge and practice through university courses and training
 - Providing training to parents and professionals in multidisciplinary settings
 - Undertaking research to expand knowledge about autism and autism intervention.

Key themes

- Holistic, person focused
- Strengths as well as needs based
- Difference which will only sometimes be disabling
- Behaviour of concern, interfering behaviour
- ASD, ASC, autism
- Issue of person centered language
- An autistic perspective



JIM SINCLAIR

NDIA Review of Good Practice in Autism Early Intervention,
Roberts & Williams 2016

To have a diagnosis of autism

- have difficulties with **social communication** and **restricted or repetitive behaviours**, for some including **sensory problems** that are out of keeping with people of a similar ability. Children and adults with autism also commonly have other developmental, emotional or behavioural problems, including anxiety, intellectual disability and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Jim Sinclair

- *“Autism” is a way of being, It is pervasive, it colours every experience, every sensation, perception, thought, emotion and encounter, every aspect of existence. It is not possible to separate the autism from the person- and if it were possible, the person you had left would not be the person you started with”.*

Individual Variability

*When you've met one person with
autism.....*



*.....you've met one person with autism
Stephen Shore*

Autism - Continuum of Characteristics

Communication

Social Impairment

RB/RI

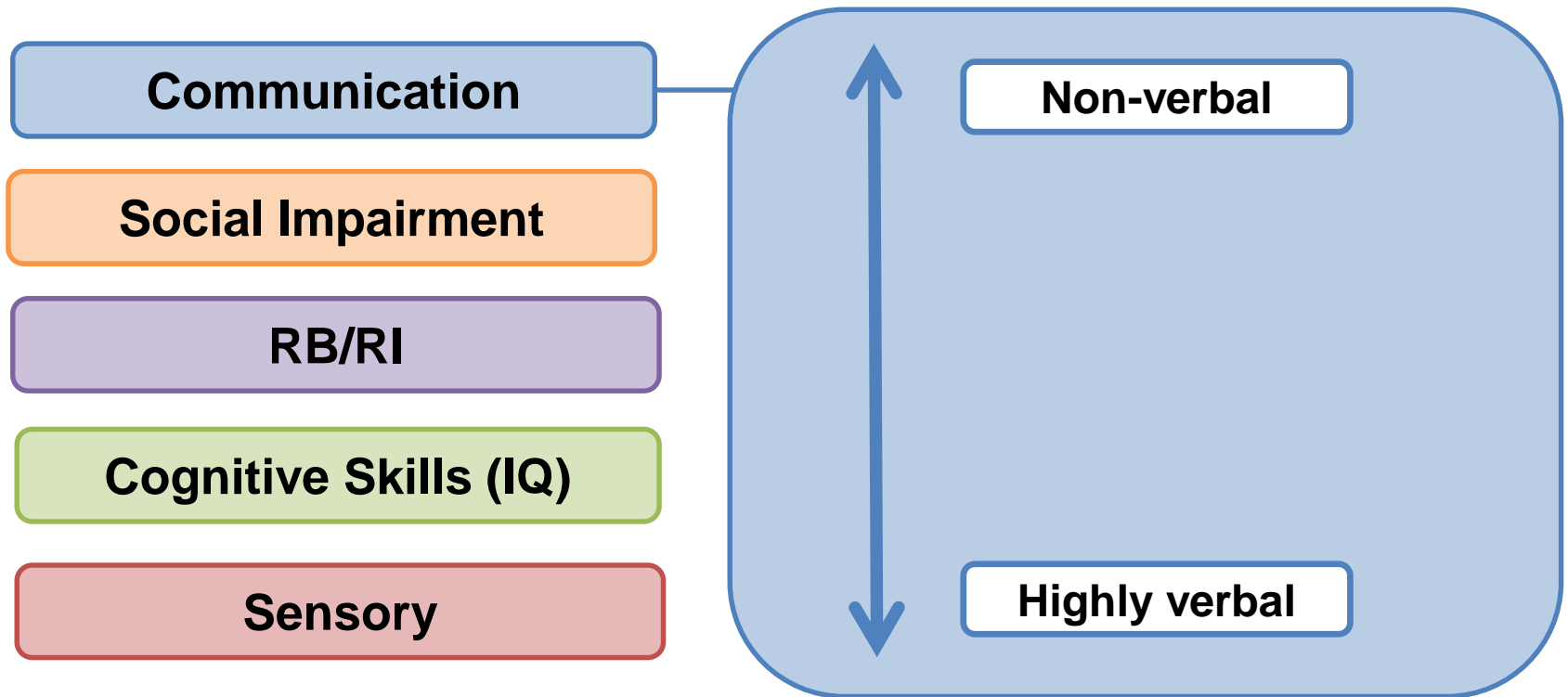
Cognitive Skills (IQ)

Sensory

Autism

affects all domains
of a person's life

Autism - Continuum of Characteristics



Tim Sharp: *Laser Beak Man*

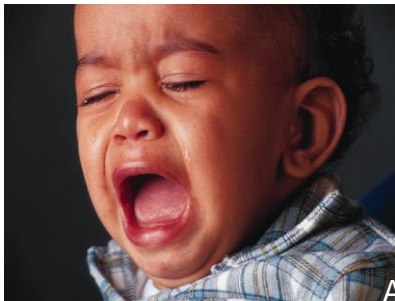


Echolalia: Function

may be used for:

- *turn taking,*
- *affirming,*
- *requesting*
- *commenting*

Stress
management
strategy

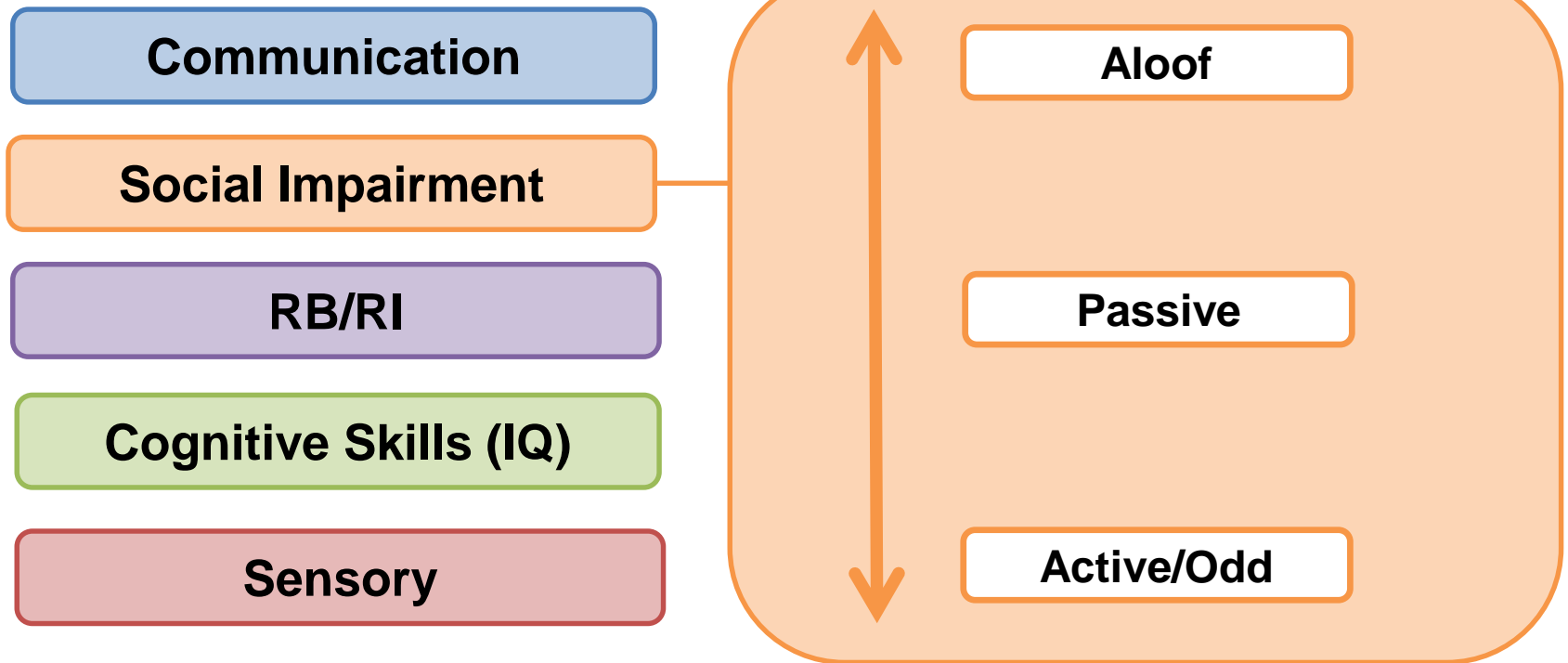


Key language
development
strategy in autism

Indicative of lack of
comprehension



Autism - Continuum of Characteristics



Mother to child with autism at shopping centre

‘Don’t talk to strange people.....we’ll talk about that when we get home’

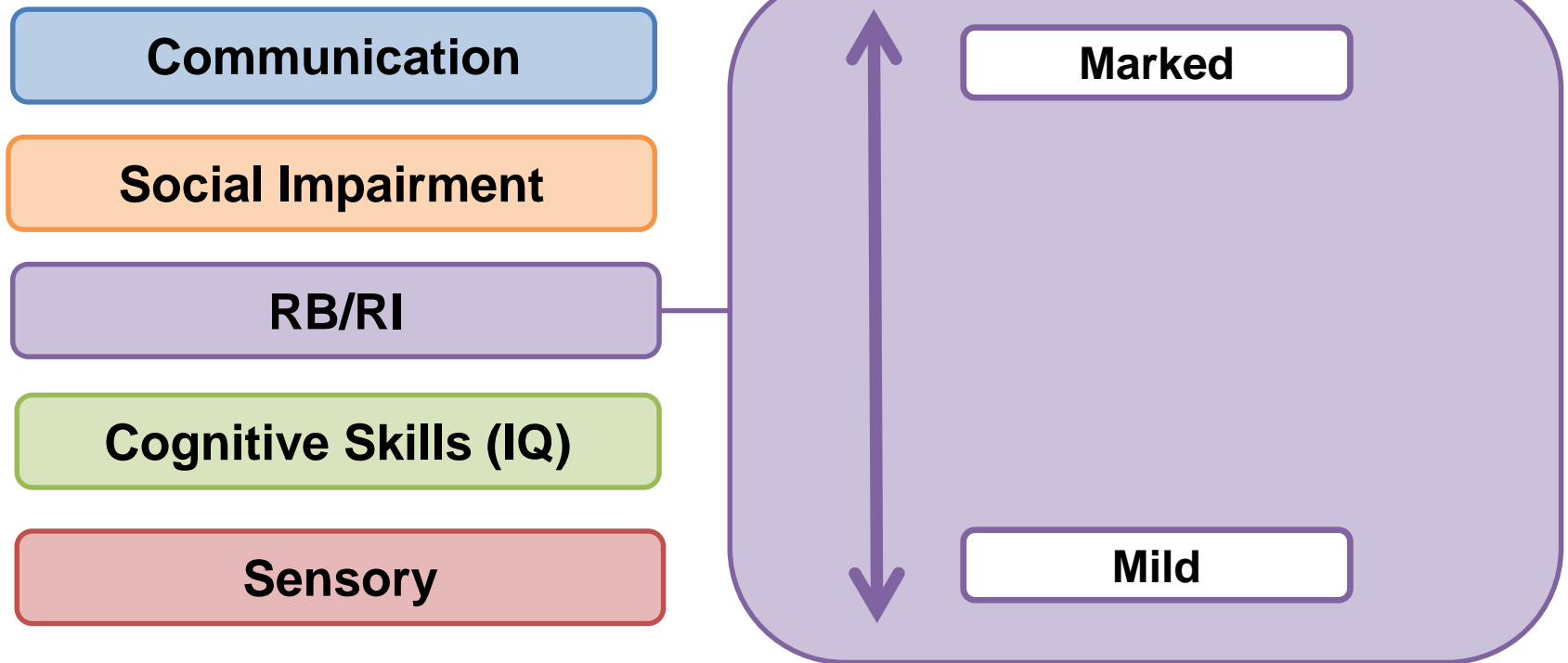
Child to stranger

‘you’re strange.....we’ll talk about that when we get home’

**Adolescent to visitors....‘Thank you for coming
– Thank you for going’**

**Student to teacher, ‘Look Miss, someone’s
thrown away a perfectly good squirrel!’**

Autism - Continuum of Characteristics



Repetitive and restricted patterns of behaviour

- Stereotyped or repetitive motor movements, use of objects or speech
- Insistence on sameness, inflexible adherence to routines, ritualised patterns of verbal or non verbal behaviour
- Highly restricted fixated interests that are abnormal in intensity of focus

Repetitive Motor movements

- Stereotyped or repetitive motor movements such as rocking spinning, flapping
- Repetitive use of objects
- Repetitive use of speech including echolalia, vocal stereotypy and perseveration

Restricted (circumscribed) Interests

- Characterised by intensity and focus
- Common in autism (91% adults – Flower and Young, 2016)
- Characterised by; loss of sense of time, bodily needs, response to interruption

Temple Grandin

“I would never talk just to be social. Now, to sit down with a bunch of engineers and talk about the latest concrete forming systems, that's really interesting. Talking with animal behaviorists or with someone who likes to sail, that's interesting. Information is interesting to me. But talking for the sake of talking, I find that quite boring.”

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5488844>

Autism - Continuum of Characteristics

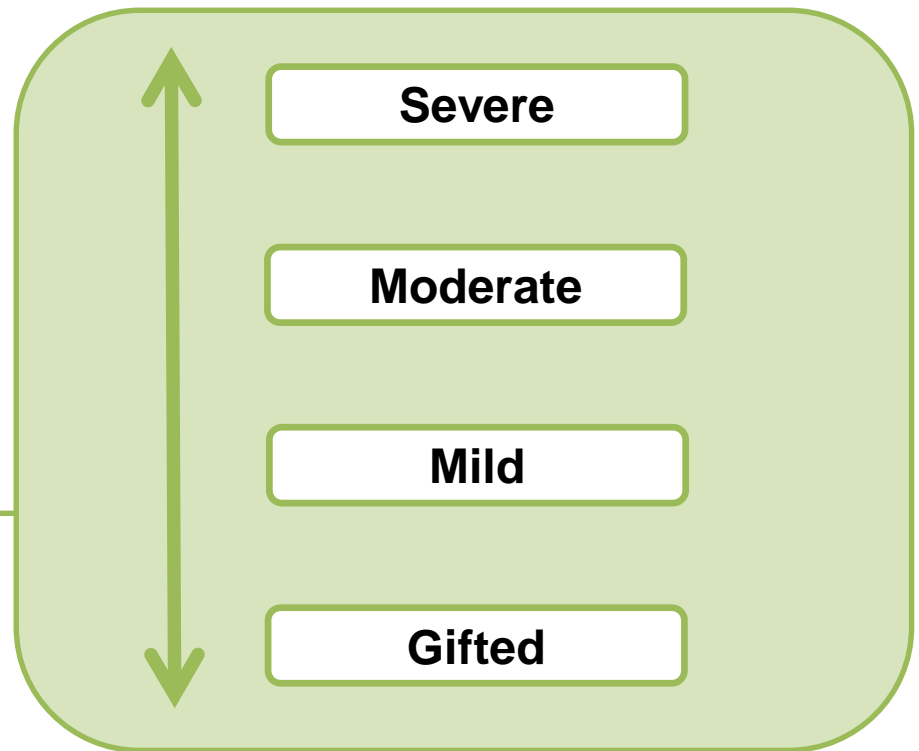
Communication

Social Impairment

RB/RI

Cognitive Skills (IQ)

Sensory



Theory of Mind

- First order false belief tasks
- Emotion causation:
situation,
desire,
belief
- Gaze direction

Weak central coherence



Executive Functioning

- Planning and organisation
- Mental flexibility
- Response
- Inhibition
- Generativity

Visual spatial skills

- Weak auditory comprehension
- Perceptual differences (processing delay for auditory information)
- Weak central coherence – attention to detail
- Memory
- Preference for predictability and routine

Result in superior processing of visual information (compared to auditory)

Tim Sharp: Barbie Queue



Autism - Continuum of Characteristics

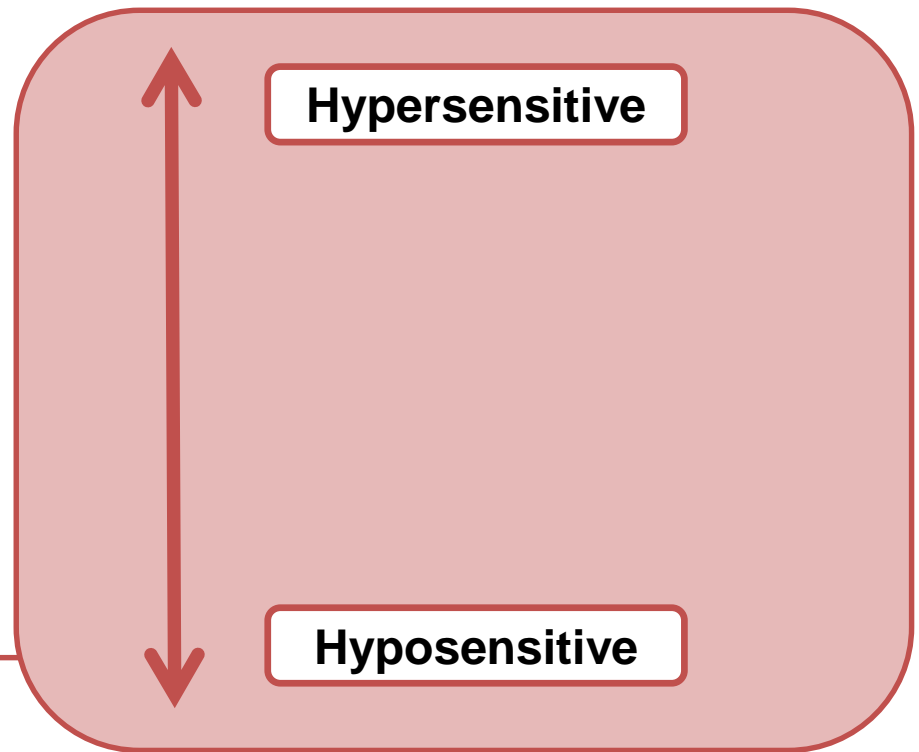
Communication

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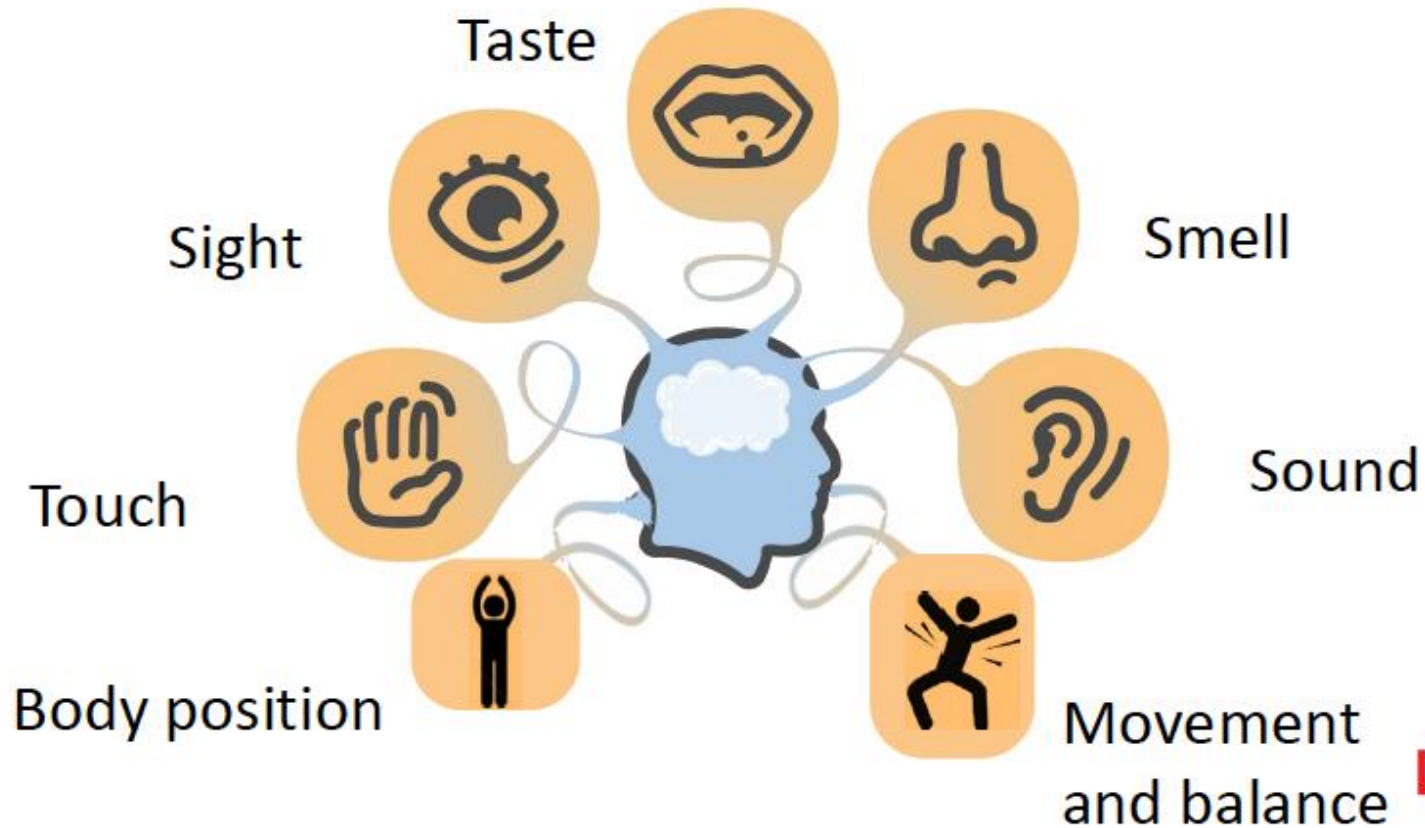
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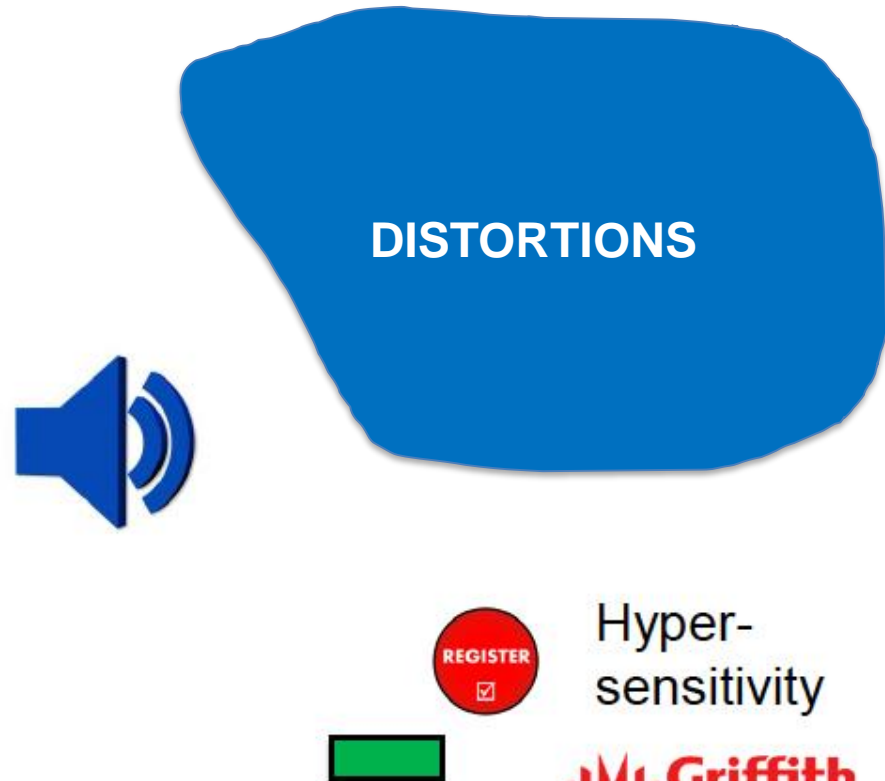
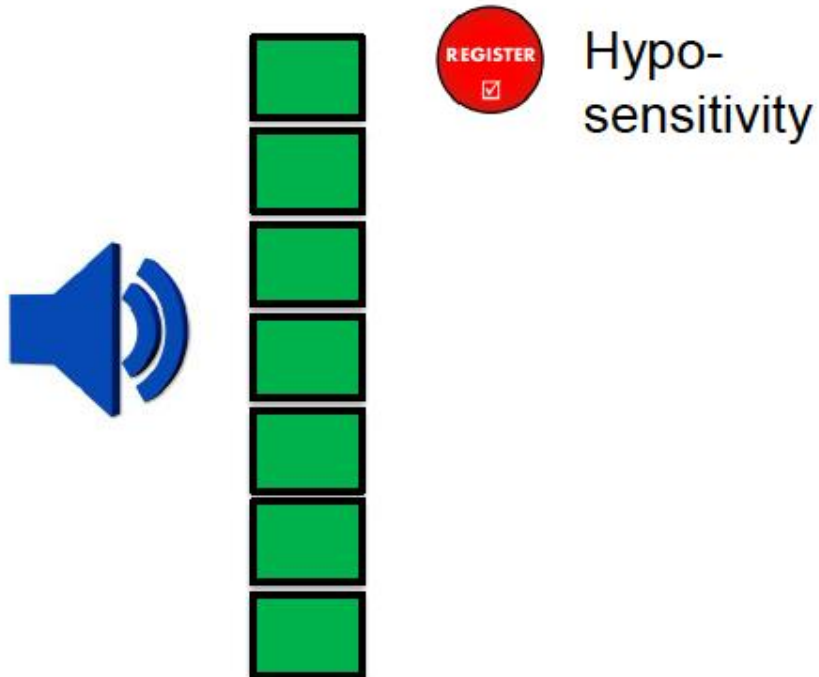
Sensory



Our senses



Sensory registration

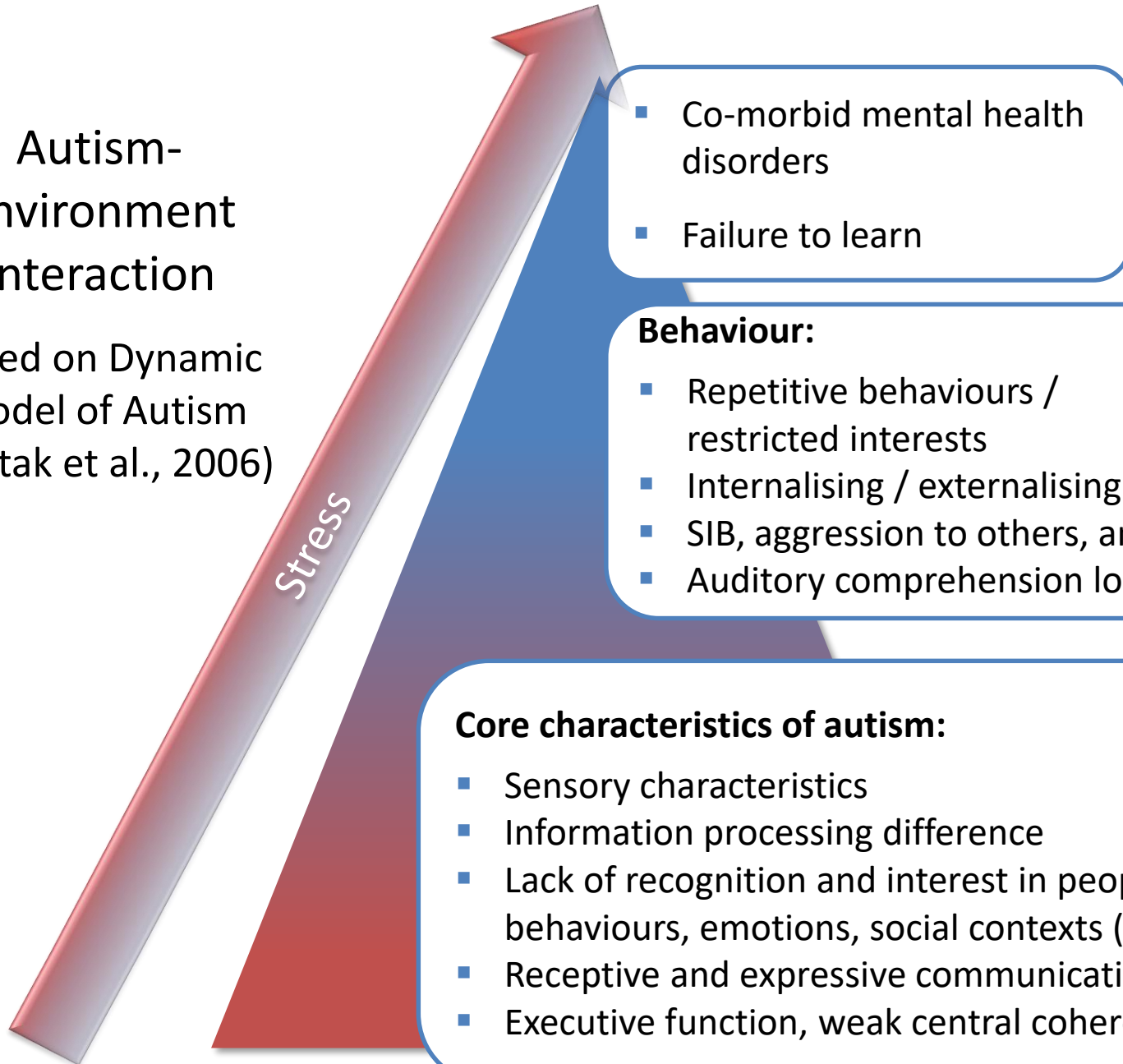


Sensory Profile

- Responses are individual
- Responses may vary for different senses
- Responses may vary within a sense
- Fluctuates/change
- No right or wrong profile
- Contextual

Autism- Environment Interaction

Based on Dynamic
Model of Autism
(Bartak et al., 2006)



Behaviour:

- Repetitive behaviours / restricted interests
- Internalising / externalising
- SIB, aggression to others, anxiety
- Auditory comprehension loss

Core characteristics of autism:

- Sensory characteristics
- Information processing difference
- Lack of recognition and interest in people: feelings, behaviours, emotions, social contexts (TOM)
- Receptive and expressive communication / language
- Executive function, weak central coherence

How? Assessing the Environment

- ?Communication partners
- ?Context
- ?Motivation
- ?Impact of sensory characteristics
- ?Communicative Function of behaviour



Communication Observation



Managing the environment

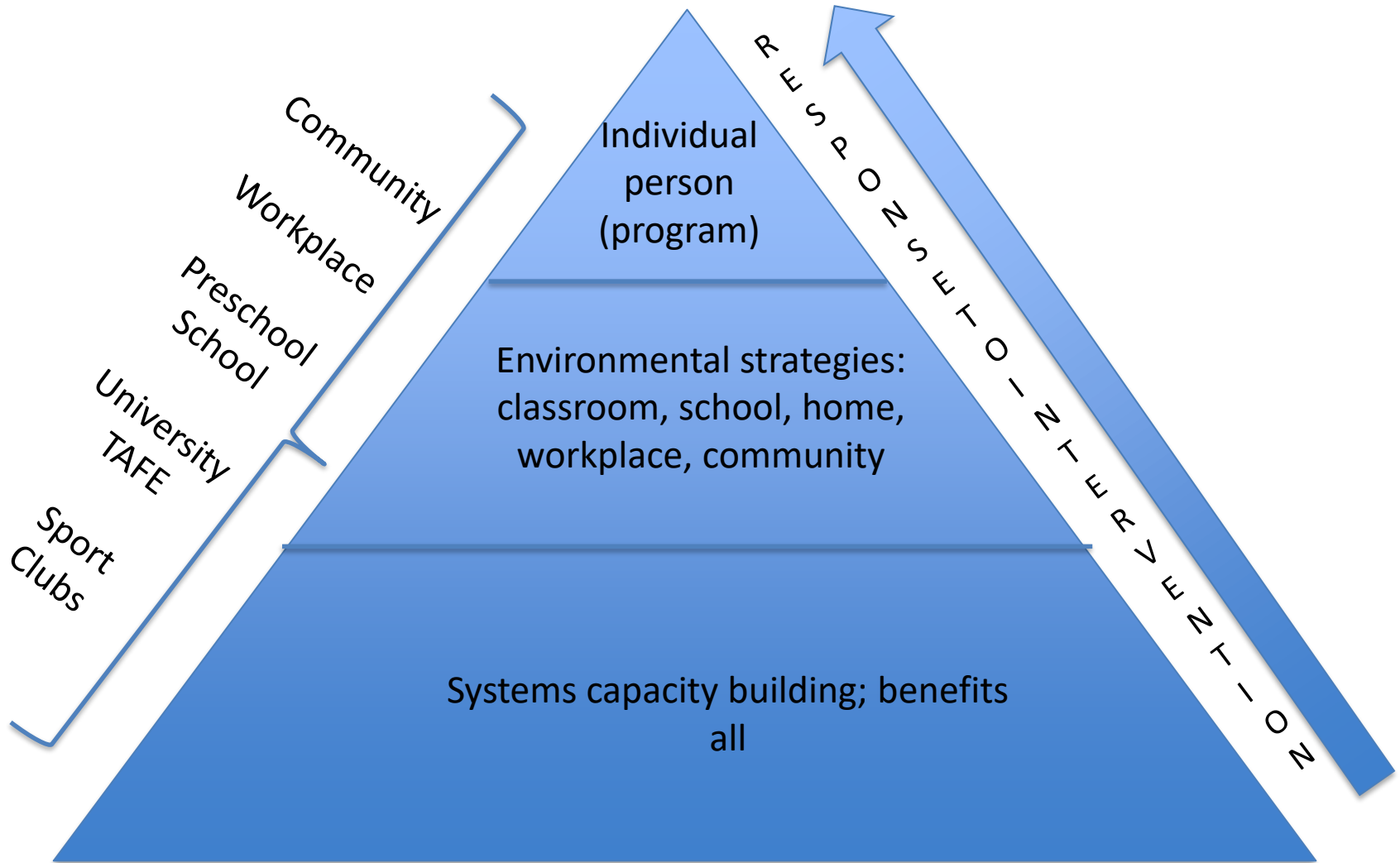
Look through an autistic lens.
Consider how the environment could change to better accommodate the person with autism. For example:

- Visual supports
- Structure and routine
- Keyboard as an alternative to handwriting

The goal is to increase

Prof. JMA
Roberts

Capacity building (SSSA)

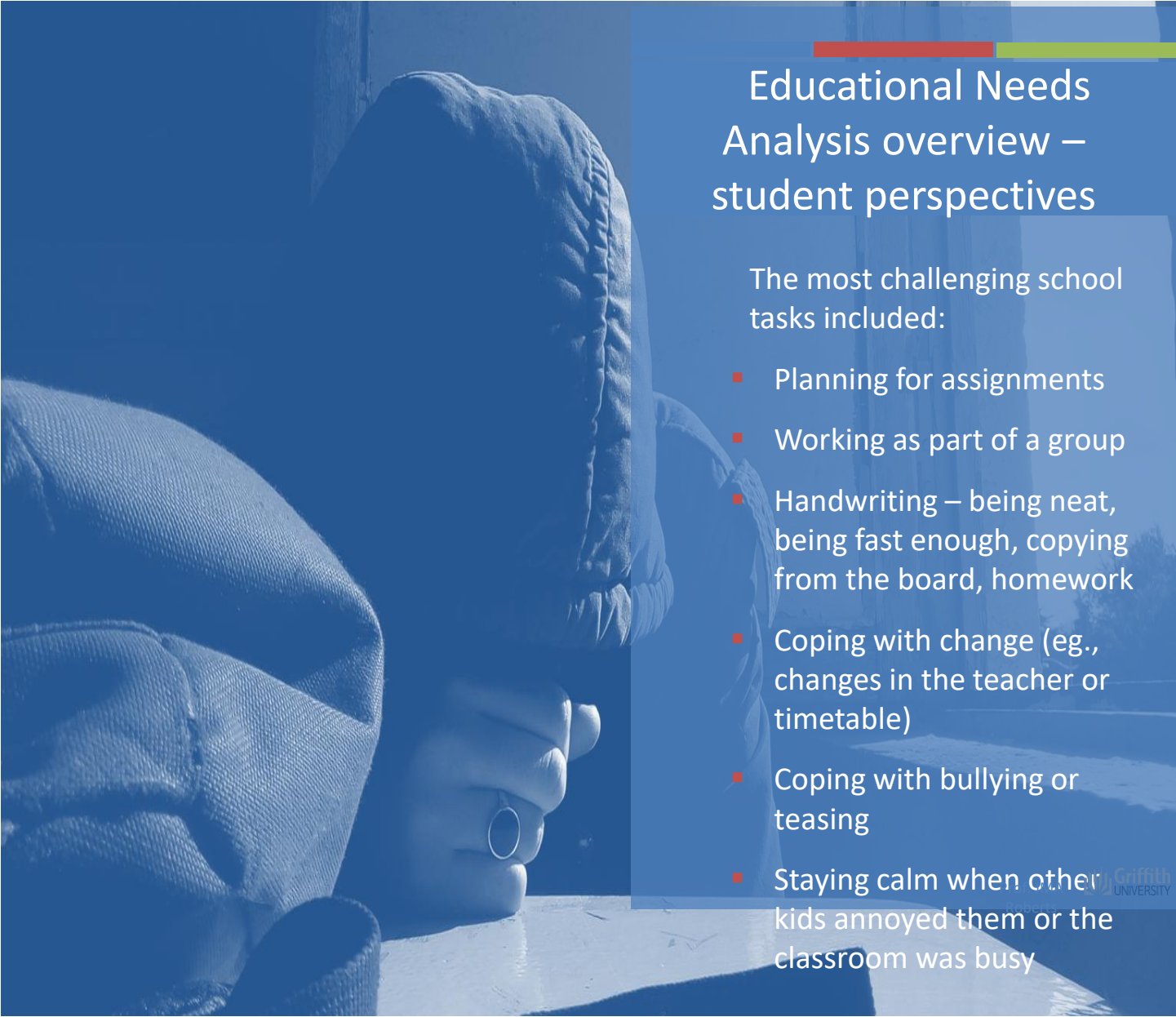


Educational Needs Analysis overview – student perspectives

The top three
highest ranking
sensory issues for
students on the
spectrum at school
were:

- Noise
- Touch
- Staying still





Educational Needs Analysis overview – student perspectives

The most challenging school tasks included:

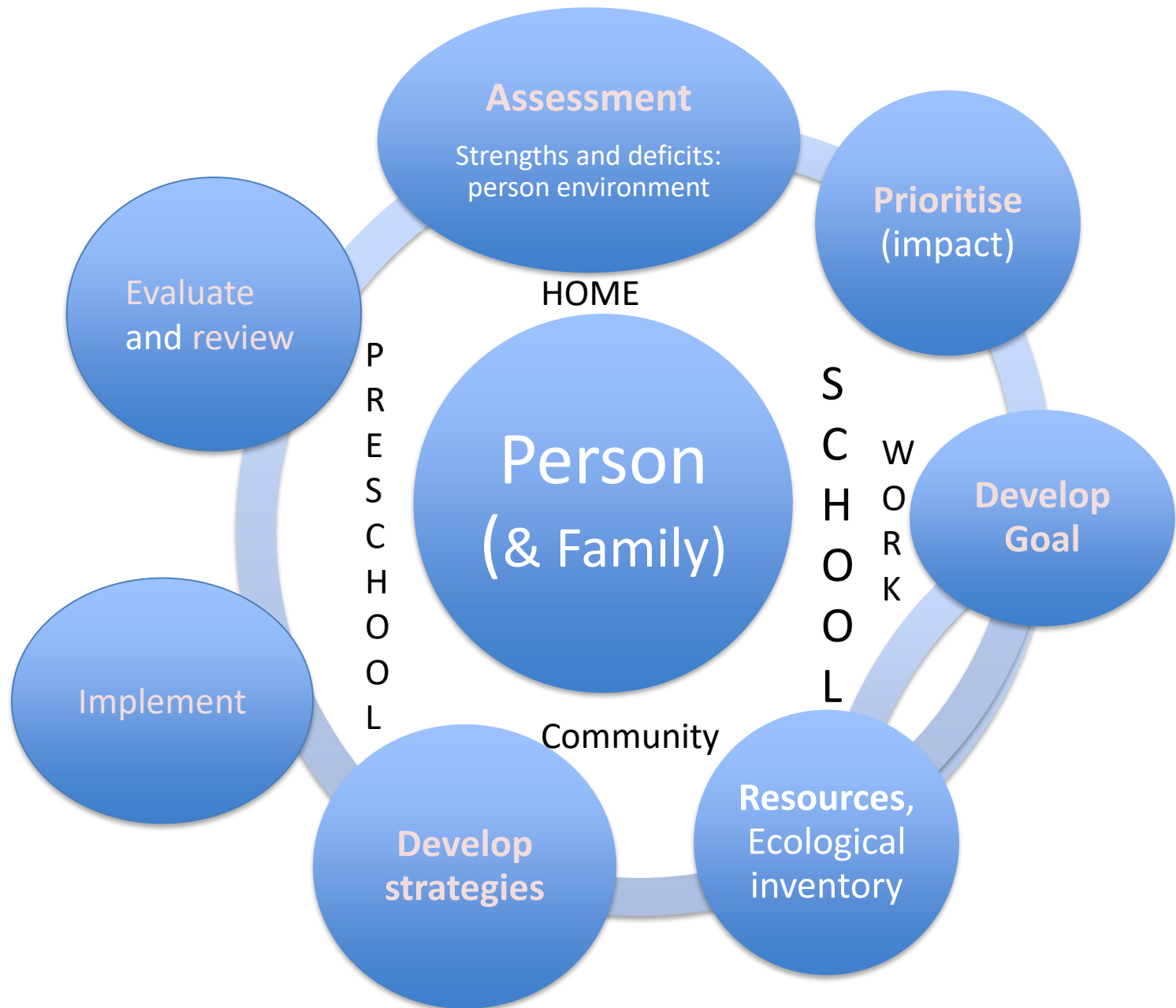
- Planning for assignments
- Working as part of a group
- Handwriting – being neat, being fast enough, copying from the board, homework
- Coping with change (eg., changes in the teacher or timetable)
- Coping with bullying or teasing
- Staying calm when other kids annoyed them or the classroom was busy

Individualised planning

- Collaborative (family and multidisciplinary professionals)
- Unique constellation of strengths and needs
- Variable rate of development
- Uneven development across domains
- Consider what can be done to accommodate the person as much as what the person needs to learn to accommodate us



Program development and implementation



Planning Matrix

(Positive Partnerships)

| | COMMUNICATION | SOCIAL INTERACTION | REPETITIVE BEHAVIOUR RESTRICTED INTERESTS | SENSORY PROCESSING INFORMATION PROCESSING | COGNITION |
|-----------------|---------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-----------|
| CHARACTERISTICS | | | | | |
| IMPACT | | | | | |
| STRATEGIES | | | | | |

Communicating with people on the spectrum

- Honour communication that already exists e.g. behaviours, sounds, gestures
- Keep language brief, concrete and age appropriate
- Don't assume comprehension
- Maximise visual modes, especially relevant pictures, photos, remnants.
- Remember people with autism may inadvertently offend or hurt

Maximise Communication

- Respect gaze avoidance if this is an issue
- Try communicating indirectly if more comfortable for the person, e.g. writing, email, text , phone, use of puppet, toy mike, singing
- Don't over talk, pausing may help comprehension and silence is ok.


Communication strategies

- Manage literal language; Interpret figurative language; jokes, metaphors, slang & sarcasm
- Double check for comprehension
- Use visuals/personal dictionary to help remember meaning of figurative language
- Use powerful interests to make a connections
- Capitalise on interests to maximise motivation
- Rehearsal and practice

Supporting social interaction

- Respect person with autism, discover their priorities
- Facilitate opportunities to mix with peers, most effective if structured e.g. small special interest group
- People with autism may not find social interaction for its own sake rewarding (find that a rather odd NT characteristic)
- Specific role, explain rules, check for comprehension
- Be aware that noise may be an issue

Social interaction on line

- Cyberspace relationships are often important for people with autism and are easier for them to navigate
- Internet may be used for dating, gaming, sharing interests with others and even living in virtual worlds
- Emoticons simplify the expression of emotion
.

Restricted interests

- Involvement in interests likely to determine sense of identity
- Be calming and relaxing
- Be motivating

Savant Skills

- Autism is often characterised by areas of strength that are out of keeping with overall developmental level e.g. hyperlexia.
- May be exceptional or prodigious skills (savant)
- Strong and circumscribed interests diagnostic criteria for autism. Time engaging in a special interest can lead to high skill levels in this area.
- Sometimes considered functional and encouraged e.g. computers, reading, sport, music.
- Sometimes considered problematic e.g. an interest in cleaning products, washing machines, air-conditioning units, shopping centre locations.



– Temple Grandin

- “If I could snap my fingers and be nonautistic, I would not – because then I wouldn’t be me.”
- Autism is part of who I am.”





Laser Beak Man - A Double Shot of Happiness by Tim Sharp