Module 3

Description of the youth needs

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. **Identify** the needs of youth with ASD

2. **Understand** where those needs come from

3. **Learn** about scientific theories that explain some of the needs of youth with ASD

4. **Distinguish** needs and strengths

5. **Adopt** new strategies and activities that can be adopted in order to be more supportive of youth with ASD in meeting their needs

1. Need for support in communication

Need for support in communication

As seen in previous modules, people with ASD have communication difficulties.

One of the main needs is therefore
SUPPORT IN COMMUNICATION

People with ASD may have different difficulties, precisely because the disorder lies on a continuum of clinical manifestations.

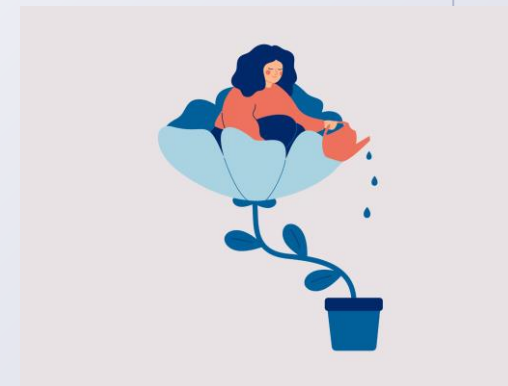Let's look together at some of the difficulties you may face

Image from Shutterstock

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Where does it come from?

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Specific difficulties

Lack of verbal language development functional to one's needs	More or less severe qualitative impairment of language and communication	The impairment affects 'communicative intentionality', i.e. these people do not appear to actively seek communication	Difficulty not only in expressing himself, but also in understanding what the interlocutor is saying	Failure to satisfy their communicative needs because they do not know the codes of communication

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Where does it come from?

Specific difficulties

not always seeking shared attention	not always maintains eye contact, even if one realises that he 'checks' with a sideways glance	does not know how to take or give the turn
does not always respond	does not always know how to exercise communicative functions, such as choosing and requesting	does not initiate, maintain and end a conversation

What can we do?

We need to find out about specific difficulties

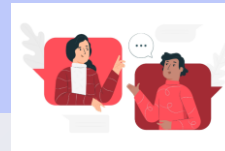and the possible use of alternative communication systems

Contact the family and professionals in charge of the person and ask

Tab 1

Tab 2

Tab 3

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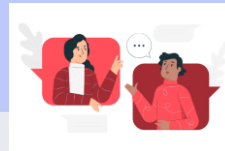
We can ask for specific training on the topic.

It is always important to deepen and update our knowledge

Tab 1

Tab 2

Tab 3

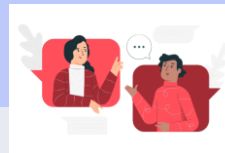We must have a basic approach that is empathetic and welcoming

The most important thing is to make the person feel that we are listening to them

Tab 1

Tab 2

Tab 3

▶ **Reflect on what active listening means and how we can become good listeners with this video.**

CLICK HERE

For more information on communication go back to the module "Introduction about ASD and communication with youth with ASD"

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2. Need for support in social interaction

Where does it come from?

Specific difficulties

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| Difficulties in communicating and interpreting the message | ➤ | Difficulties in understanding the intentions and internal emotional and mental states of the interlocutor | ➤ | Lack of ability to relate to others and share thoughts and feelings | ➤ | Social-emotional reciprocity deficit |

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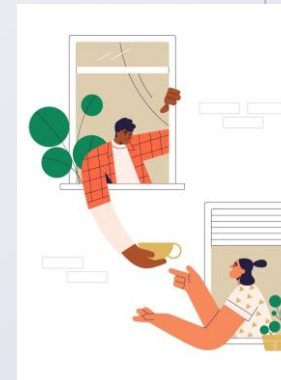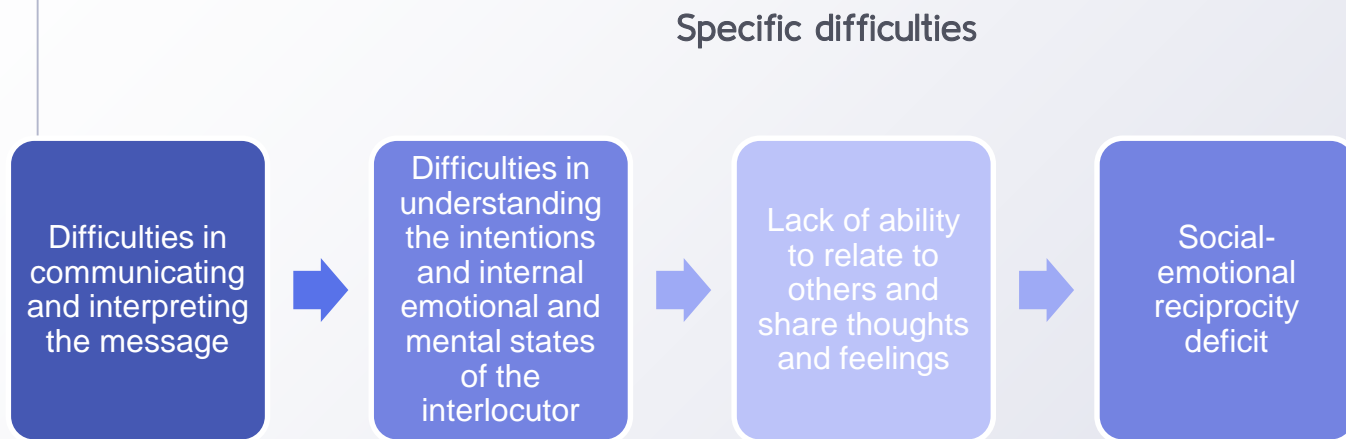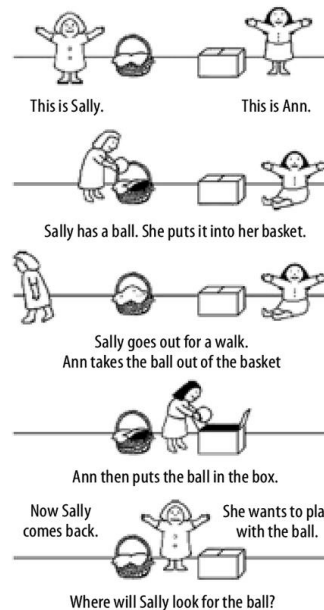
Theory of mind (ToM)

Ability to understand one's own and others' beliefs, desires and emotions.

To get closer to the concept: Sally and Anne experiment (Baron-Cohen)

▸ Normo-typical children from 4 years old onwards can answer correctly,
▸ Children with ASD have difficulty.

This is Sally.   This is Ann.

Sally has a ball. She puts it into her basket.

Sally goes out for a walk.
Ann takes the ball out of the basket

Ann then puts the ball in the box.

Now Sally comes back.   She wants to play with the ball.

Where will Sally look for the ball?

Theory of Mind Development in ASD

Shared attention	Early imitation	Symbolic play
Children with ASD tend not to follow the line of the adult's gaze and to look alternately at the object of interest and the adult	Children with ASD tend not to reproduce the expressions of others or their actions	Mechanical and repetitive play

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▶ **ToM is one of the theories that explains this particular difficulty in the social interaction of people with ASD. To learn more about this concept, watch this video.**

CLICK HERE

For more information on the Theory of mind go back to the module "Understanding cognitive and social development in youth with ASD"

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What can we do?

Developing social skills

Just like reading, mathematics and writing, we can learn social interaction skills! How can we do that?

Practice play

Role-play

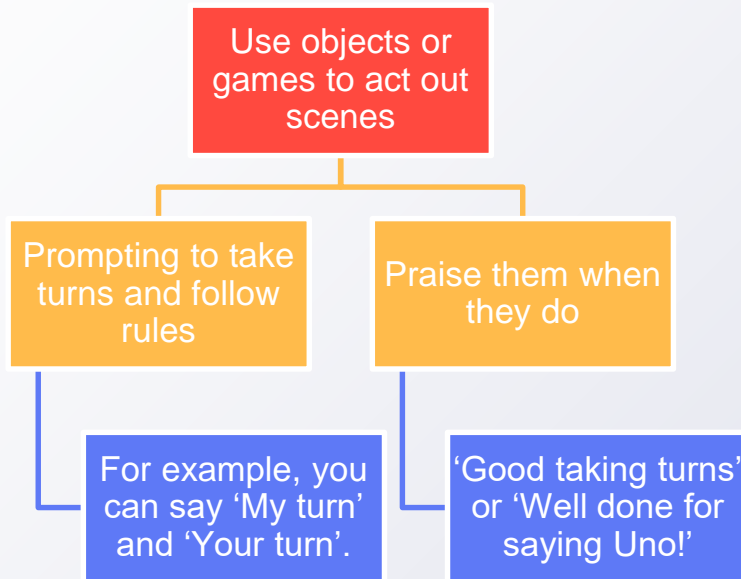Social skills training

Social stories

Video-modelling

Visual supports

Image from Shutterstock

Practice play

Use objects or games to act out scenes

Prompting to take turns and follow rules

Praise them when they do

For example, you can say 'My turn' and 'Your turn'.

'Good taking turns' or 'Well done for saying Uno!'
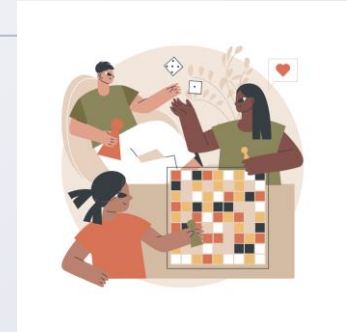

Images from Pexels

Role-play

do a role-play where the youth suggests what to play with the other youth

play the games that youth might play together

practise talking about things like what you've been watching on TV or what you did on weekend

try setting up situations that involve a social problem

having one piece of cake left over for two people

not liking what has been cooked for dinner

not having a turn on the computer

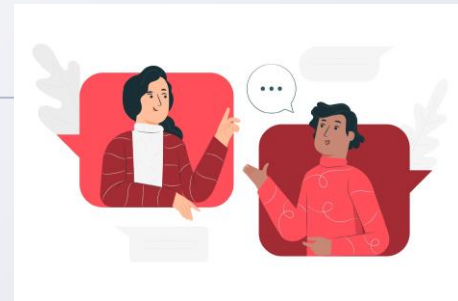Image from Freepik

Social stories

Image from Freepik

Description of a social situation	Highlight relevant cues	Examples of appropriate responses
Individualised	Quite short	With pictures or visual aids if useful

A social story about talking to my friends

Sometimes I want to talk to people.

I can talk to children.

I can talk to my teacher.

I can talk to my family.

I can talk to other grown-ups.

When people talk together, they need to be near each other.

When I want to talk to somebody, I can walk over to the person, look at them and say the person's name.

I wait until the person looks at me.

When the person is looking at me, we can talk.

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Social stories can help

explaining how others might behave or respond in a particular situation

promoting understanding about the perspective of a person with autism

coping with changes to routine and unexpected distressing events

giving feedback to someone about an area of strength or achievement, to encourage self-esteem

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Video-modelling

Image from Pexels

| Demonstration of a desired behaviour | → | Imitation of that behaviour by the learner | → | Development of new skills | → | In video modelling the behaviour is recorded on video | → | Learner can review when he/she wants and as many times as he/she wants |
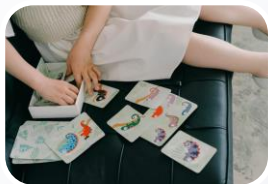
Visual supports

Picture cards

Tactile cards

Photos

Short videos

Stickers

Scales
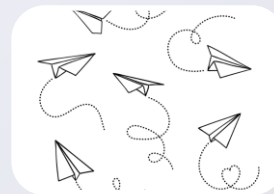
Line drawings

Images from Pexels, Shutterstock and Freepik

Visual supports

Used as a prompt or to learn a new skill or social situation

What happens when you go out for a meal – you arrive at the restaurant, speak to the waiting staff, look at the menu, order the food, the food is cooked and then served, you eat the meal and then pay the bill and leave.

This breaks down events so they are non-threatening for people with ASD

3. Need for support in recognizing and expressing emotions

Need for support in recognizing and expressing emotions

Experiencing emotions

Recognition of emotions

Expression and coping with emotions

Where does it come from?

Theory of Mind

Deficit in recognizing facial expressions related to emotions

Image from Pexels

What can we do?

Developing emotional skills

Specific programs	Games	Social stories or comic strips

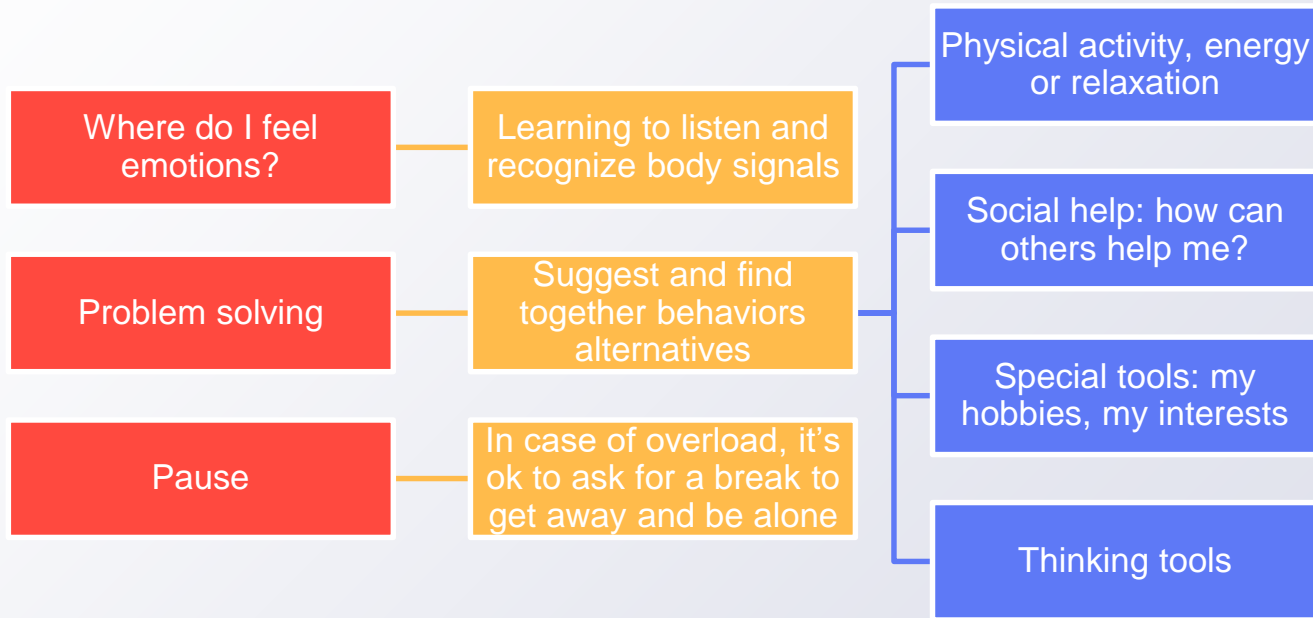| "The Transporters" (Changing Media Development, 2006)	CAT-kit (*Cognitive Affective Training kit*)	Recognize emotions on: photographs, schematic drawings and puzzles	Associating emotion with the situation (cause-effect)	Identify an emotion on mime and then imitate it	Short stories of invented characters in specific situation

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Developing emotion regulation

Where do I feel emotions? — Learning to listen and recognize body signals

Problem solving — Suggest and find together behaviors alternatives

Pause — In case of overload, it's ok to ask for a break to get away and be alone

- Physical activity, energy or relaxation
- Social help: how can others help me?
- Special tools: my hobbies, my interests
- Thinking tools

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4. Need for predictability

Where does it come from?

| Perception of the environment as a confusing element | Incomprehensibility or excessive difficulty of requests | Failure to understand the surrounding social context and to communicate one's needs | Difficulties in managing one's own emotions and understanding the emotions of others | Maladaptive behaviours and anxiety | Need for structure and predictability |

An example of structuring: the TEACCH method

Where?	What?	Why?	For how long?	How?
Objects used to clearly structure the space	Scheme of work, visual sequence, video modelling	Reinforcing elements	Agenda or timer	Physical, gestural, verbal help

Structuring

Structuring must not mean rigidity ➡ Flexible structure built around the needs of the subject ➡ Can be changed at any time ➡ Importance of gradually incorporating «unforeseen events»
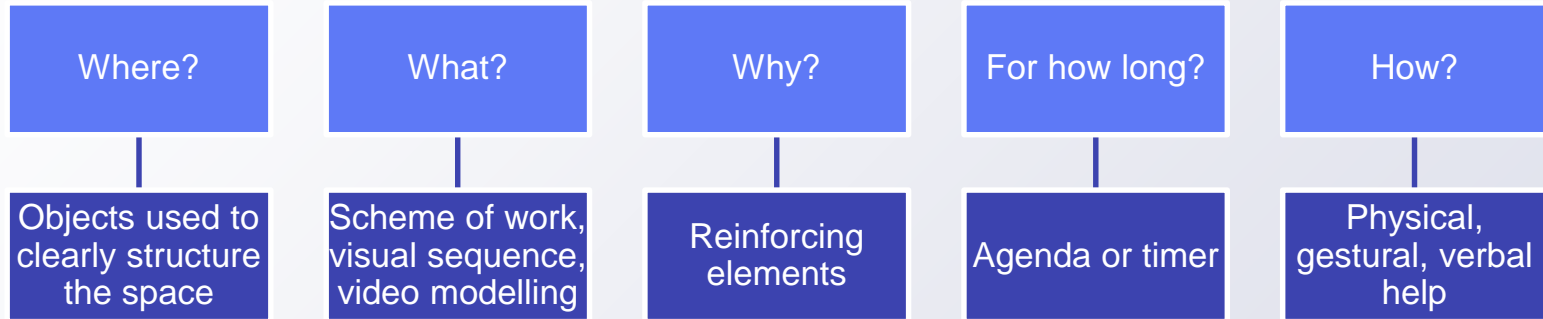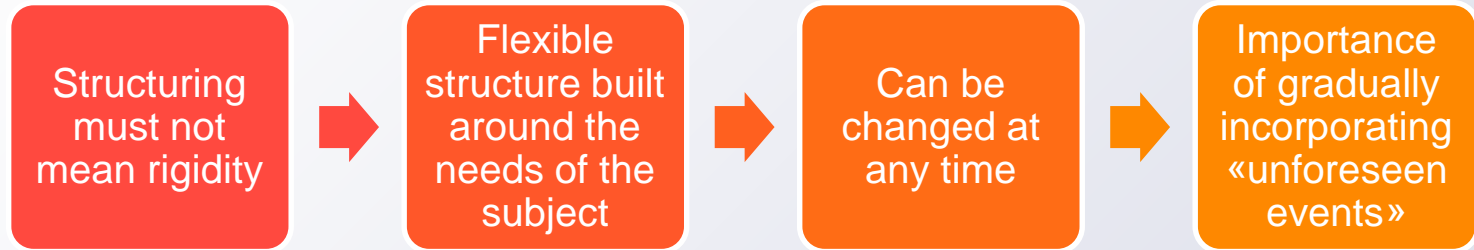
5. Sensory sensitivity

Sensory sensitivity – What can we do?

Hyper-sensitivity

Compulsive seeking
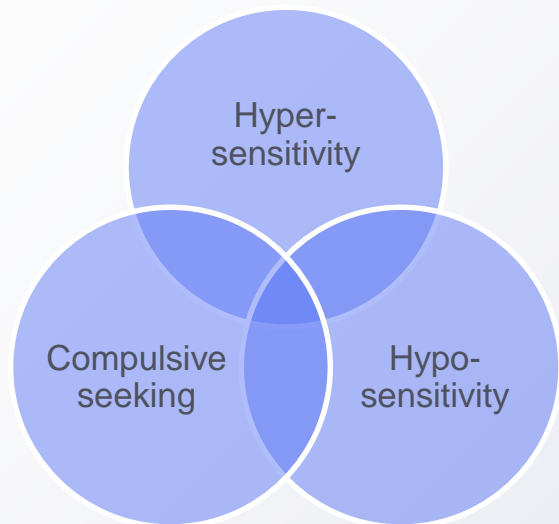
Hypo-sensitivity

Adapting the environment according to specific sensory sensitivity

Gradually insert unpleasant stimuli

Prepare the individual with ASD for the environment he or she will face beyond the secured setting

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▶ People with ASD perceive their surrounding differently from the rest of us. Temple Grandin, diagnosed with autism as a child, talks about how her mind works – sharing her ability to "think in pictures", watch the video to learn more about this topic!

For more information on the sensory sensitivity go back to the module "Creating a safe and inclusive environment"

CLICK HERE

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6. Autonomy and independence

Autonomy and independence

All people with ASD have the right to:
- ▸ Self-determination
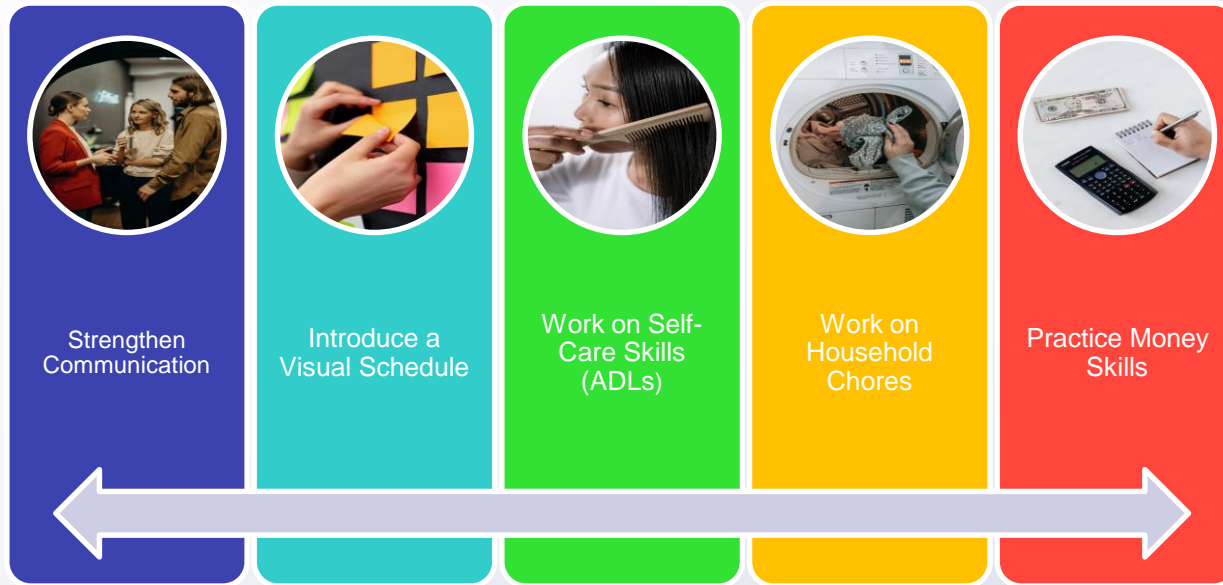- ▸ Freedom of choice

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Support and guide them in achieving key personal autonomies that can make them independent in life after us.

Image from Shutterstock

Developing autonomy and independence

Strengthen Communication

Introduce a Visual Schedule

Work on Self-Care Skills (ADLs)

Work on Household Chores

Practice Money Skills

Images from Pexels and Freepik

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Developing autonomy and independence

Teach Community Safety Skills

- pedestrian safety
- identifying signs
- public transportation

Teach to Ask for a Break

Build Leisure Skills

independent leisure and recreation

Work on Vocational Skills

Images from Pexels and Freepik

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Assessment

True / False Questions

QUESTION 1: *Verbal and non-verbal language difficulties affect communicative intentionality, so people with ASD do not appear to actively seek communication*

Possible answer(s)	1. True 2. False
Correct answer(s)	e.g. True
Response to correct answer(s)	e.g. Congratulations! Your answer is correct.
Response to wrong answer(s)	e.g. Not quite right. The correct answer is "A. True"

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QUESTION 2: *What are the precursors of the child's mental representation capacity according to the Theory of Mind?*

Possible answer(s)	1. Socio-emotional reciprocity and communicative intentionality 2. Hyper- and hypo-sensitivity 3. Shared attention, early imitation and symbolic play 4. Verbal and non-verbal language difficulties
Correct answer(s)	e.g. Congratulations! Your answer is correct.
Response to correct answer(s)	e.g. 3
Response to wrong answer(s)	e.g. Not quite right. The correct answer is "3"

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Drag and Drop

Instructions

Elements to Drag
(e.g. text boxes, images…)

Content
Practice play

Content
Video-modelling

Content
Social stories

Content
Role-play

Drop positions

Content
The technique in which objects or games are used to act out scenes

Content
Demonstration of a desired behaviour and imitation by the learner with the possibility of reviewing the demonstration

Content
Description of a social situation highlighting relevant cues and giving examples of appropriate responses

Content
practise talking about things like what you've been watching on TV or what you did on weekend

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Type the correct answers in the boxes

People with ASD experience emotions but have difficulties in | recognising | and | expressing and managing | them

To develop the ability to manage emotions, it is important to practise listening to and recognising | body signals |

| Problem solving | can be useful to reflect together and find and suggest alternatives of appropriate behaviour to manage emotions

In case of meltdown or shutdown, people with ASD can ask for a | break | to get away for a while, be alone and recharge their batteries, there is nothing wrong with that.

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Put words in the right arrangement

learn | autonomous | with ASD | people | can | to be | and | independent

People with ASD can learn to be autonomous and independent.

foster | important | It is | self-care | autonomy | to work | on | skills | to

It is important to work on self-care skills to foster autonomy

Manage | safely | learning | and | the environment | are | enhance | to | money | explore | activities | independence | that

Learning to manage money and explore the environment safely are activities that enhance independence

With ASD | vocational | to | possible | identify | working | skills | enables | areas | of work | on | people

Working on vocational skills enables people with ASD to identify possible areas of work.

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End of Module