

TEACHING UNDERSTANDING AND ACCEPTANCE OF AN ASD DIAGNOSIS

Assisting Individuals on the Autism Spectrum to
Understand and Accept Different Ways of Being



Margaret Hildebrandt
www.asdconsultant.ca

WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

When you leave here I would like you to have:

- ❖ An understanding of why some parents choose not to tell their child about his/her diagnosis.
- ❖ An understanding of why it is important for individuals on the spectrum to understand different ways of being and their diagnosis.
- ❖ Food for thought about when, where and how to share the diagnosis.

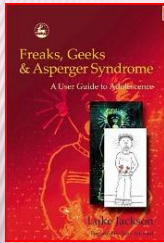
WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

When you leave here I would like you to have:

- ❖ Some strategies, techniques and resources to assist when teaching individuals on the spectrum about their diagnosis.
- ❖ thoughts about promoting self-advocacy.

Freaks, Geeks, and Asperger Syndrome

By
Luke Jackson



Ages

11 to adulthood

- ❖ Written by a 13 yr. old boy who has Asperger's Syndrome
- ❖ Comes from a family of 7 children with various learning challenges including autism

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WHY PARENTS CHOOSE NOT TO SHARE THE DIAGNOSIS WITH THEIR CHILD

- ❖ They are hoping the person will "grow out of it".
- ❖ They don't like labels.



Dr. Tony Atwood wrote about
labels being signposts.



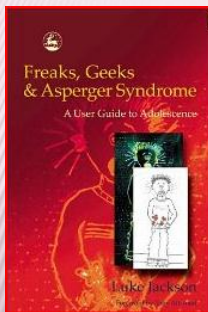
What do signposts do?

They lead people in the right direction.

WHY PARENTS CHOOSE NOT TO SHARE THE DIAGNOSIS WITH THEIR CHILD

- ❖ They are hoping the person will “grow out of it”.
- ❖ They don't like labels.
- ❖ They don't know how to go about sharing the diagnosis.
- ❖ They are waiting for “the right time”.
- ❖ The professionals that have seen the individual don't all agree on the diagnosis.





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Freaks, Geeks, and
Asperger Syndrome
By
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WHY PARENTS CHOOSE NOT TO SHARE THE DIAGNOSIS WITH THEIR CHILD

- ❖ They put off telling their child because the action is “irreversible” and they fear the unknown.
- ❖ They worry the label will become a self-fulfilling prophecy and the individual will start to show symptoms they didn't already have.
- ❖ They worry that the individual will use the diagnosis as an excuse for inappropriate behaviours or things they can't do.

DR. STEPHEN SHORE - SHOULD YOU TELL YOUR CHILD ABOUT HIS/HER AUTISM DIAGNOSIS?

Excuse



You Tube

WHY PARENTS CHOOSE NOT TO SHARE THE DIAGNOSIS WITH THEIR CHILD

- ❖ They worry the person will become angry or depressed.
- ❖ They worry that the diagnosis will make the individual feel inferior with no hope for the future.



DR. STEPHEN SHORE - SHOULD YOU TELL YOUR CHILD ABOUT HIS/HER AUTISM DIAGNOSIS?

Self Esteem



You Tube

WHY PARENTS CHOOSE NOT TO SHARE THE DIAGNOSIS WITH THEIR CHILD

- ❖ They worry the person will become angry or depressed.
- ❖ They worry that the diagnosis will make the individual feel inferior with no hope for the future.
- ❖ They feel their child does not have the capability to understand their diagnosis.

CARLY FLEISHMAN



"When it comes to my son,I am not sure how aware he is but I still talk to him and tell him things because, you never know how much might be getting through. I do feel that hiding it promotes shame and I would like to encourage pride in all aspects of his personality. Autism is so much a part of who he is, just like his blue eyes. He has a right to know... I just believe that if I want other people to accept him, he has to learn to accept himself."

Liz

http://www.bbbaautism.com/pros_and_cons_plaintext.htm

WHY PARENTS CHOOSE NOT TO SHARE THE DIAGNOSIS WITH THEIR CHILD

- ❖ They worry the person will become angry or depressed.
- ❖ They worry that the diagnosis will make the individual feel inferior with no hope for the future.
- ❖ They feel their child does not have the capability to understand their diagnosis.
- ❖ They worry people will treat their child according to some misinformed people's opinions on what autism is.

WHY PARENTS CHOOSE NOT TO SHARE THE DIAGNOSIS WITH THEIR CHILD

- ❖ They worry that the diagnosis could limit the expectations of others.
- ❖ They worry that their child will fixate on the topic of ASD.

IF THE INDIVIDUAL BECOMES FIXATED ON THE TOPIC OF ASD

- ❖ Present the information in a matter-of-fact manner.
- ❖ Keep sessions short and end each session in the same symbolic way, such as putting away specific materials.
- ❖ When it's time to stop talking about autism, make it clear that attention needs to shift and direct the child to a different, high interest topic.
- ❖ Set limits on when and how long the child can talk about autism. Indicate times to talk about autism on the child's daily schedule.

ASD Talk



<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,536360,00.html>

WHY TELL THE PERSON ABOUT THEIR DIAGNOSIS



- ❖ The person is starting to ask questions about their challenges
- ❖ The person is starting to ask questions about their special services
- ❖ The person has heard the term "Autism", Asperger's Syndrome or "ASD" and want to know what it is
- ❖ The person is making comments about feeling "different"
- ❖ To ensure they don't come to the wrong conclusions about their perceived differences

WHY TELL THE CHILD ABOUT THEIR DIAGNOSIS

- ❖ In order to raise self-awareness and to help the person understand their strengths and talents.
- ❖ The person sees themselves as a failure.
- ❖ All people should be respected and empowered.
- ❖ Self-knowledge is the prerequisite for self-advocacy.



SHOULD THE CHILD BE TOLD?

"The answer is a resounding 'yes.' Clinical experience indicates that it is extremely important that the diagnosis (of Asperger's) is explained as soon as possible and preferable before inappropriate compensatory mechanisms are developed. The child is then more likely to achieve self-acceptance, without unfair comparisons with other children, and be less likely to develop signs of anxiety disorder, depression or conduct disorder."

Dr. Tony Attwood, 2005

<http://www.ahany.org/ShouldYouExplainTheDiagnosis.htm>

"The purpose in telling a child about their Asperger's is not to put a label on it, but to help him or her begin to understand the way s/he thinks, the way s/he relates to other people, the way s/he learns, and to know him/herself well enough to be able to self-advocate as s/he moves through high school, college, and beyond."

*Ellen Notbohm
Award winning Autism author and parent*

WHEN DO YOU TELL THE CHILD ABOUT THEIR DIAGNOSIS

- ❖ The person is starting to ask questions about their challenges
- ❖ The person is starting to ask questions about their special services
- ❖ The person has heard the term "Autism", Asperger's Syndrome or "ASD" and wants to know what it is
- ❖ The individual is making comments about feeling "different"
- ❖ To help the person understand why some situations are difficult for them

WHEN DO YOU TELL THE CHILD ABOUT THEIR DIAGNOSIS



- ❖ The person has unrealistic expectations about their future
- ❖ The person is starting to go out into the world by themselves on a regular basis
- ❖ The person is facing challenging situations such as being bullied, relationship issues, difficulty finding or holding on to a job



Vermeulen, Peter. *I Am Special*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers. London, UK. 2008.
p.g. 18

WHEN DO YOU TELL THE CHILD ABOUT THEIR DIAGNOSIS

**The process
should start right
away.**

DR. STEPHEN SHORE - SHOULD YOU TELL YOUR CHILD ABOUT HIS/HER AUTISM DIAGNOSIS?

When Do You Tell



YouTube

WHEN DO YOU TELL THE CHILD ABOUT THEIR DIAGNOSIS

- ❖ The process should start right away.
- ❖ The actual disclosure of the diagnosis depends on personal circumstances.
- ❖ Consider the mental age, abilities, personality, and social awareness of the child.
- ❖ It is important to be proactive and share the diagnosis at a positive time not as a result of unpleasant experiences.



WHEN DO YOU TELL THE CHILD ABOUT THEIR DIAGNOSIS

- ❖ Discuss the diagnosis when there are no major transitions occurring (i.e. school break, change of school, moving, vacation).
- ❖ Before the child hits the teenage years.
- ❖ This is not a single event but an ongoing process that changes as the child matures and experiences different situations.



SETTING THE STAGE FOR DIAGNOSIS DISCLOSURE

- ❖ Set a positive tone about differences within the family and others.
- ❖ Discuss things such as likes/dislikes, physical differences, and talents/strengths/challenges in a matter of fact, concrete way.
- ❖ Read books about differences and challenges.





Amazingly...Alphiel Understanding and Accepting Different Ways of Being. Written by Roz Espin, Illustrated by Beverley Ransom, \$16.50

Alphiel the computer learns that the humans in his lab who think he's malfunctioning and incompatible are quite mistaken, when a new worker, Chris, who is having a little difficulty fitting in himself, takes the time to explore the possibilities in Alphiel's different "wiring." For eight-and-up.

SETTING THE STAGE FOR DIAGNOSIS DISCLOSURE

- ❖ Highlight the child's treasures and accomplishments.
- ❖ Have a scrapbook of photos, awards and stories about the child's accomplishments.



SETTING THE STAGE FOR DIAGNOSIS DISCLOSURE

- ❖ Participate in events put on by the local Autism Ontario chapter.
- ❖ Use the terms "Autism", "ASD", "Asperger's", when appropriate.
- ❖ Read books about being on the autism spectrum.





All Cats Have Asperger
Syndrome
By
Kathy Hoopman

All Cats Have Asperger Syndrome takes a playful look at Asperger Syndrome, drawing inspiration from the feline world in a way that will strike a chord with all those who are familiar with AS. Delightful colour photographs of cats bring to life familiar characteristics such as sensitive hearing, scampering at the first sign of being stroked, and particular eating habits. Touching, humorous and insightful, this book evokes the difficulties and joys of raising a child who is different and leaves the reader with a sense of the dignity, individuality, and potential of people with AS. This engaging book is an ideal, gentle introduction to the world of AS.

IMPORTANT MESSAGES TO INCLUDE

"You are a unique, loved and valued person who is on the autism spectrum."



"People are born with autism."

"ASD is not a disease. It is not catching and you won't die from it. It means your brain works differently. It is a different way of being."

IMPORTANT MESSAGES TO INCLUDE

"You will always have autism. It cannot be cured but you can learn ways to help yourself with things that you find challenging."



IMPORTANT MESSAGES TO INCLUDE

"There are lots of other people all over the world who have ASD, both children and adults."



"When you've met one person with ASD, you've met one person with ASD – all are unique."



Different Like Me: My Book of Autism Heroes. Jennifer Elder, \$20.95 (ages 8 to 12)

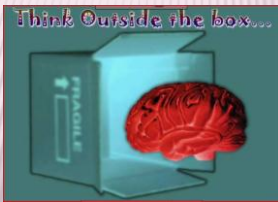
Eight-year-old Quinn, a young boy with Asperger's Syndrome, tells young readers about the achievements and characteristics of his autism heroes, from Albert Einstein, Dian Fossey and Wassily Kandinsky to Lewis Carroll, Benjamin Banneker and Andy Kaufman, among others. All excel in different fields, but are united by the fact that they often found it difficult to fit in – just like Quinn.

IMPORTANT MESSAGES TO INCLUDE



“ASD means your brain is wired differently not defectively.”

“You have special talents and qualities due to your ASD.”



“It seems that for success in science or art, a dash of autism is essential. For success, the necessary ingredient may be an ability to turn away from the everyday world, from the simply practical, an ability to re-think a subject with originality so as to create in new untrodden ways, with all abilities canalized into the one specialty.”

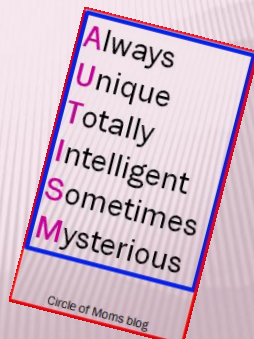
Dr. Hans Asperger 1979, p.49.

*"If the world was left to you
socialites, we would still be in
caves talking to each other."*



Dr. Temple Grandin

IMPORTANT MESSAGES TO INCLUDE



**Is Asperger's
Syndrome the next
stage of human
evolution?**

IMPORTANT MESSAGES TO INCLUDE



"There will always be people there to help you when you are confused or in trouble, to answer your questions, and cheer you on."



Explaining Autism Spectrum Disorders to individuals on the spectrum is not easy due to the challenges of the disorder.

THINKING & LEARNING STYLE CHALLENGES WHEN EXPLAINING A DIAGNOSIS TO SOMEONE WITH ASD

Individuals with ASD:

- ❖ Do not do well with the abstract – ASD is an abstract, puzzling disorder.
- ❖ Often perceive things differently than us.
- ❖ Think in absolute, concrete, straightforward, black and white terms – be careful with nuances.

THINKING & LEARNING STYLE CHALLENGES WHEN EXPLAINING A DIAGNOSIS TO SOMEONE WITH ASD

Individuals with ASD:

- ❖ Are hyper-selective and often focus on irrelevant details.

CHALLENGES OF EXPLAINING A DIAGNOSIS TO SOMEONE WITH ASD



THINKING & LEARNING STYLE CHALLENGES WHEN EXPLAINING A DIAGNOSIS TO SOMEONE WITH ASD

Individuals with ASD:

- ❖ Are hyper-selective and often focus on irrelevant details.
- ❖ Are usually “visual thinkers or learners”.

COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES WHEN EXPLAINING A DIAGNOSIS TO SOMEONE WITH ASD

"Trying to 'talk' about autism with a person with autism is a bit like trying to show a blind person what blindness is by means of drawings and pictures."



Vermeulen, Peter. *I Am Special*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers. London, UK. 2008.

COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES WHEN EXPLAINING A DIAGNOSIS TO SOMEONE WITH ASD



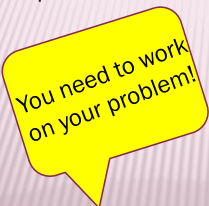
Individuals with ASD:

- ❖ Don't always understand that what we mean and what we say is not always the same thing.
- ❖ Do not usually understand the body language, facial expressions, tone differences in spoken language so they miss or misunderstand things given to them verbally.
- ❖ Do not do well with open ended questions.
- ❖ Often have difficulty expressing their thoughts, questions and/or feelings.

COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES WHEN EXPLAINING A DIAGNOSIS TO SOMEONE WITH ASD

Individuals with ASD:

- ❖ Often give different or special meaning to words and concepts.



SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL CHALLENGES WHEN EXPLAINING A DIAGNOSIS TO SOMEONE WITH ASD

Individuals with ASD:

- ❖ Often have difficulty understanding and recognizing emotions and therefore do not do well with emotional information.
- ❖ Have difficulty with "theory of mind".
- ❖ Often have unrealistic self-concepts.



HOW TO DISCLOSE THE DIAGNOSIS - GENERAL POINTS TO CONSIDER

"As you explain things to these kids, always match your explanation to their cognitive and emotional level. Don't overestimate how much they know because they have a large vocabulary. Always make sure they understand you as you move step by step."

Mark Hutten - Counseling Psychologist

HOW TO DISCLOSE THE DIAGNOSIS - GENERAL POINTS TO CONSIDER

- ❖ Be prepared.
- ❖ Determine who is the best person to explain about the actual diagnosis.
- ❖ Ensure that you are calm and not showing signs of stress.
- ❖ Pick a time when your child is in a relaxed state.
- ❖ Introduce the information little by little, building block format.



HOW TO DISCLOSE THE DIAGNOSIS – GENERAL POINTS TO CONSIDER

- ❖ Take the child's lead.
- ❖ Have discussions in a distraction-free, comfortable environment.
- ❖ Before you begin, assess what the child already knows and how much they are ready to hear.
- ❖ Be positive.

BE POSITIVE

“Congratulations! You have
Asperger's Syndrome.”

HOW TO TELL – POINTS TO CONSIDER AROUND THINKING & LEARNING STYLES

- ❖ Keep the discussions as concrete and related to real life situations as possible.
- ❖ Use visuals such as worksheets, grids, checklists.
- ❖ Start a scrapbook about “ASD and Me” in which you can write out the information and glue in the worksheets.

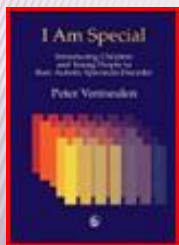


I Am Special

Introducing Children and Young People to their Autistic Spectrum Disorder

By

Peter Vermeulen



Ages:

- 10+ (average intelligence)
- 12+ (below average intelligence)

Worksheet activities focusing on:

- Strengths
- Preferences and differences
- How the brain works
- Disabilities and disorders
- Autism

Includes detailed instructions for the Instructor

HOW TO TELL – USING VISUALS

My interests and preferences

My favourite...

Television programme:

Food:

Country:

Book:

Music:

Sport:

My hobbies:

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Vermeulen, Peter. *I Am Special*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers. London, UK. 2008.

But we can do something about it!

Autism cannot be cured but that doesn't mean that nothing can be done about it at all.

Just as for the other disabilities, people with autism **can learn to cope with their difficulties** and they **can be helped** with:

- ✓ Special supports, resources and aids, like schedules
- ✓ Special education and training, like a special school or a social skills training
- ✓ Assistance and guidance by professionals, like a psychologist
- ✓ An adapted environment, like a special work corner

Below are some examples of how I am being helped:

Supports, resources and aids	
Special education and training	
Assistance and guidance by professionals	
An adapted environment	

Pg.

My interests and preferences

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An adapted environment	

HOW TO TELL – POINTS TO CONSIDER AROUND THINKING & LEARNING STYLES

- ❖ Allow for written questions – e-mails, question box, journal.
- ❖ Write social stories about the diagnosis and the child.
- ❖ Start an “achievement book” to focus all the great talents and accomplishments.
- ❖ Decide on the terminology you will be using.
- ❖ Describe ASD as a “different way of being”.



HOW TO TELL – POINTS TO CONSIDER AROUND COMMUNICATION

- ❖ Assist the child in verbal communication by using a fill-in-the blank format, or a list of possible answers.

HOW TO TELL – POINTS TO CONSIDER AROUND COMMUNICATION

- ❖ Assist the child in verbal communication by using a fill-in-the blank format, or a list of possible answers.
- ❖ Keep language simple.
- ❖ Use consistent terms.
- ❖ Share what was discussed and the language used with others involved.

HOW TO TELL – DR. STEPHEN SHORE

Four Step Approach



You Tube

HOW TO TELL – DR. STEPHEN SHORE



You Tube

HOW TO TELL – DR. TONY ATWOOD

Step 1:

- ❖ Gathers family members and the individual on the spectrum
- ❖ For each family member they develop a chart of “qualities” and “difficulties”

<http://www.ahany.org/ShouldYouExplainTheDiagnosis.htm>

THE ATTRIBUTE ACTIVITY

Qualities	Difficulties
Honest	forgetful
Kind	messy
Eye for decorating	worry too much

THE ATTRIBUTE ACTIVITY

Qualities	Difficulties
Liked by grownups	Trouble making friends
Great at remembering things others forget	Understanding jokes
Expert on space and the Titanic	Anger sometimes takes over
A perfectionist	Don't like to be touched
Can hear things others don't notice	Tolerating certain sounds
See details others don't see	Coping with changes

HOW TO TELL - DR. TONY ATWOOD

Step 2:

- ❖ The facilitator explains that the scientists are always looking for patterns in human behaviour and when they find a pattern they give it a name.
- ❖ The facilitator explains what ASD means
- ❖ There is a discussion about the positive attributes the individual has which are related to his/her ASD.

HOW TO TELL – DR. TONY ATWOOD

Step 3:

- ❖ The facilitator explores the difficulties the individual has which are related to the diagnosis.
- ❖ Strategies to help overcome some of those challenges are discussed and plans made.

HOW TO TELL – DR. TONY ATWOOD

Step 4:

- ❖ Focuses on the question of “Who else needs to know” and plans are made on when and how to share that information.

<http://www.ahany.org/ShouldYouExplainTheDiagnosis.htm>

A WORD ABOUT SIBLINGS

Children and teenagers who have siblings on the spectrum may feel:

- ❖ Embarrassed about their sibling's behaviour or mannerisms.
- ❖ Frightened when their sibling has a meltdown.
- ❖ Worried about the signs of stress their parents are showing.
- ❖ Jealous because their sibling gets more attention, time and money spent on them.

A WORD ABOUT SIBLINGS

Children and teenagers who have siblings on the spectrum may feel:

- ❖ Upset because their sibling won't play or hangout with them.
- ❖ Resentful because they have to look after their sibling who may be older.
- ❖ Resentful that they have to be "dragged along" to appointments for their sibling.
- ❖ Responsible for taking care of their sibling.

A WORD ABOUT SIBLINGS

Children and teenagers who have siblings on the spectrum may feel:

- ❖ That they are to blame for their siblings challenges.
- ❖ Fearful that their friends won't understand.
- ❖ Worried about what happens to their sibling in the future.

A WORD ABOUT SIBLINGS

Siblings of individuals on the Autism Spectrum also have a right to know.

SELF-ADVOCACY

"Self-advocacy involves knowing when and how to approach others in order to negotiate desired goals, and to build better mutual understanding, fulfillment, and productivity."

Stephen Shore

Ask and Tell: Self-Advocacy and Disclosure for People on the Autism Spectrum. Stephen M. Shore, editor. Autism Asperger Publishing Co. Shawnee Mission, KS. 2004. p.g. v.

Ask and Tell: Self-Advocacy and Disclosure for
People on the Autism Spectrum
Stephen M. Shore, editor



Age
Adult

- Written by six individuals with autism
- Focus on empowering other individuals on the spectrum

THE PROCESS OF SELF-ADVOCACY



SELF-KNOWLEDGE IS ESSENTIAL FOR SELF-ADVOCACY



"Using the IEP to Build Skills In Self-advocacy and Disclosure". Stephen Shore.

from Ask and Tell: Self-advocacy and Disclosure for People on The Autism Spectrum. Stephen Shore, editor. Autism Asperger Publishing Company. Shawnee Mission, KS. 2004. p.64,65

SELF-ADVOCACY

Individuals on the spectrum often have poor self-advocacy skills because:

- ❖ Of a weak understanding of social patterns.
- ❖ Of learned helplessness caused by well meaning adults.
- ❖ Theory of mind difficulties:
"I know what I need so does everyone else"
- ❖ They haven't been taught them.

TEACHING SELF-ADVOCACY

- ❖ Starts when the individual is self-aware of their strengths and challenges.
- ❖ Self-advocacy is often taught around needs at school or a community club/group
- ❖ Allow the individual to contribute to school planning groups and IEP meetings.
- ❖ Teach the individual to use letter writing as a tool for self-advocacy instead of speaking to the person directly.

TEACHING SELF-ADVOCACY

- ❖ Teach the individual to use charts to help organize thoughts, actions and consequences

TEACHING SELF-ADVOCACY – USING CHARTS

24 • Ask and Tell	
Disclosure Worksheet	
1-10 Level: ____	
Situation: My supervisor wants me to move to a different cubicle. It will be noisy and distracting in the new location.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Tell	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Tell
What I am really distressed about is that I am sensitive and on the spectrum of autism.	Just move and make the best of it.
Possible result: One may not move for a promotion next month.	Possible result: be miserable, may make mistakes, less work from distractions
<input type="checkbox"/> Tell Later	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Need Help
- Try to do a week - Say: I'll give it a try, but it may be too noisy for the kind of work I do.	- Should I disclose about my autism? - If I do what should I say? - Get help
Possible result: A week may be too hard. I may be short tempered.	Name: Mary Phone: 000-000-0000 Email: mary@trivia.org Notes: Mary suggests to try the new cubicle for one week - call her if I need more help.

"Communicating Through Advocacy and Self-Disclosure: Four Ways to Connect. Joyner Hane, Ruth Elaine. Ask and Tell: Self-Advocacy and Disclosure for People on the Autism Spectrum. Stephen M. Shore, editor. Autism Asperger Publishing Company. Shawnee Mission, KS. 2004. P.26

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TEACHING SELF-ADVOCACY – KASSIANE SIBLEY'S SIX STAGE PROCESS

Stage 2 – *Facilitating and Confidence Building*

- ❖ Facilitator, guides the individual through the steps of self-advocacy.
- ❖ Facilitator observes and steps in if necessary while the individual self-advocates.

TEACHING SELF-ADVOCACY – KASSIANE SIBLEY'S SIX STAGE PROCESS

Stage 3 – *Partnering and Letter Writing*

- ❖ Facilitator, lets the individual take the lead through the steps of self-advocacy and offer guidance.
- ❖ Facilitator teaches the individual letter writing as a form of advocacy.

TEACHING SELF-ADVOCACY – KASSIANE SIBLEY'S SIX STAGE PROCESS

Stage 4 – *Moral Support*

- ❖ Facilitators in the vicinity for emergencies and maintaining self-confidence.

Stage 5 – *Taking the Lead*

- ❖ Facilitator assists only under the direction of the individual.

Stage 6 – *Independent self-Advocacy*

- ❖ The individual prepares, presents and evaluates completely independently.

TEACHING SELF-ADVOCACY

Host a Coming Out Party

- ❖ Put out snacks labeled favorite and least favorite.
- ❖ Provide a sensory friendly environment for the party with things that make the individual comfortable and calm.
- ❖ Put up small signs about using quiet voices, respecting personal space, no smoking.

TEACHING SELF-ADVOCACY

Host a Coming Out Party

- ❖ Give the guests stim/sensory toys in goodie bags.
- ❖ Spread out brochures, AS newsletters, books, and DVDs on tables and in the bathroom.
- ❖ Make a flyer with important information about the individual to give out.

TEACHING SELF-ADVOCACY

Host a Coming Out Party

- ❖ Play a personal version of Twenty Questions using the categories of sensory, social skills, cognitive processing, emotional concerns, language issues.

*Disclosure and Self-Advocacy: An Open door Policy. Holliday Willey, Liane. *Ask and Tell: Self-Advocacy and Disclosure for People on the Autism Spectrum*. Stephen M. Shore, editor. Autism Asperger Publishing Company, Shawnee Mission, KS. 2004. Chpt. 6. Pg. 181-182



DVD: Growing Up With Autism and Aspergers
Available to buy from Autism Ontario

...When you don't know who you are, you create a man-made self as a substitute for your beautiful divine being and cling to that fearful and needy self. Protecting and enhancing that false sense of self then becomes your primary force... when you know who you truly are, there is an abiding sense of peace. You could call it joy because that's what joy is: vibrantly alive peace. It is the joy of knowing yourself as the very life essence before life takes on form. That is the joy of Being - of being who you truly are.

(Tolle, 2003, p. 52,57)

I Built a Bridge
by Jim Sinclair

Thank you
Margaret
Hildebrandt