

Supporting College Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders



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FAU Center for Autism & Related Disabilities (CARD)

Agenda

- Overview of FAU CARD services
- What are Autism Spectrum Disorders?
- Common Strengths
- Challenges & Strategies
 - Communication
 - Social
 - Sensory
 - Executive Functioning



FAU Center for Autism & Related Disabilities (FAU CARD)

- FAU's Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD) is a **community-based program** providing expert **consulting, training and support**, at **no charge** to people with autism and related disabilities, their families, the professionals serving them, and the community
- FAU CARD was established by the Florida Legislature, and is funded through the **Florida Department of Education**



FAU CARD



Services offered at no charge...

- Family and School Consultations
- Trainings and Workshops
- Public Education
- Referrals and Resources
- Social Group for Adults with ASD
- And much more...

Autism: Facts & Figures

- 1 in 59 children (CDC, 2018)
- 4:1 males to females
- About half: average or better IQ
- No ethnic/racial/cultural/ socioeconomic boundaries
- Most diagnosed after age 4
- Adult population with ASD at about **1.5 million** May have comorbid condition (i.e. Down Syndrome, intellectual disability, Tourette Syndrome, sensory impairment, mental illness)



Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): What Is It?

Pervasive Developmental Disability (PDD)

- Autism WAS the best known of the disabilities under the PDD umbrella

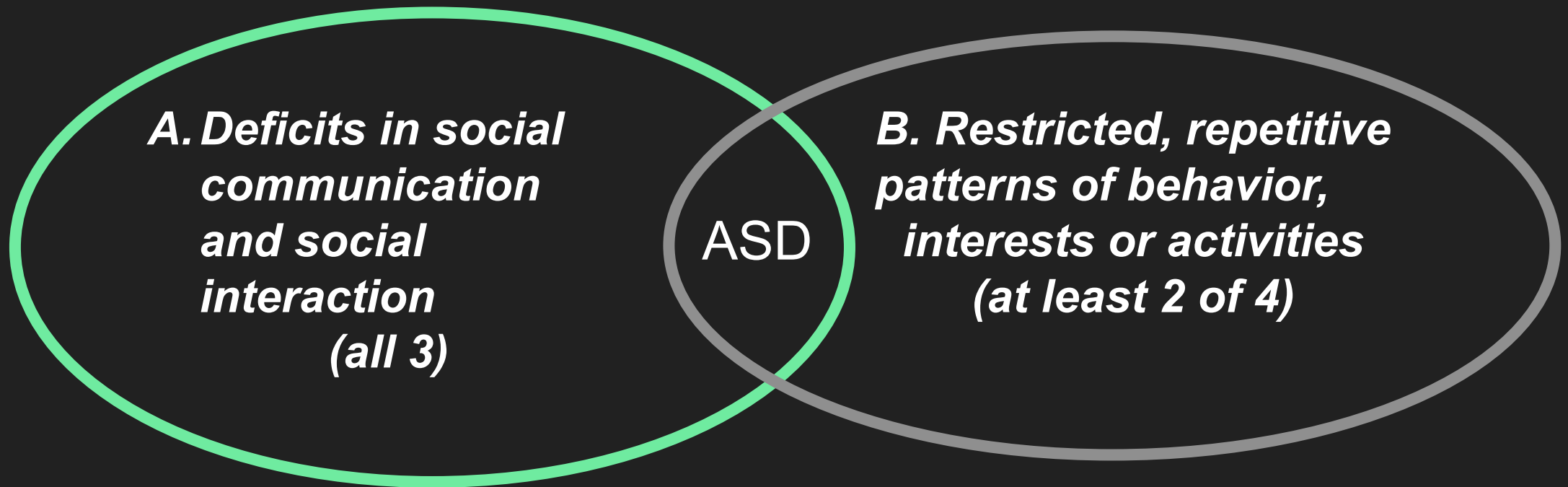
Autistic Disorder

Asperger's
Syndrome

Childhood
Disintegrative
Disorder



Features of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) DSM-5



DSM-5: Social Communication and Social Interaction

1. Deficits in social-emotional reciprocity

2. Deficits in nonverbal communicative behaviors used for social interaction

3. Deficits in developing, maintaining, and understanding relationships

DSM-5: Restricted, Repetitive Patterns of Behavior, Interests, or Activities

1. *Stereotyped or repetitive motor movements, use of objects, echolalia, idiosyncratic phrases*
2. *Insistence on sameness, inflexible adherence to routines, or ritualized patterns of verbal or nonverbal behavior*
3. *Highly restricted, fixated interests that are abnormal in intensity or focus*
4. *Hyper- or hypo-reactivity to sensory input or unusual interest in sensory aspects of the environment*

Common Strengths of People with ASD

- General cognitive ability
- Grammar and vocabulary
- Rote memory
- May demonstrate interest in the social world
- Special interests and talents
- Concrete skills
- Attention to visual material and details
- “Out of the Box” Thinkers



Communication Challenges & Strategies

May:

- Have difficulty expressing thoughts and ideas
- Have difficulty understanding verbal communication
 - Verbal ability may mask receptive difficulties
- Not notice non-verbal cues
- Speak in overly formal manner (pedantic)
- Have slowed processing speed
- Have difficulty knowing when and how to ask for help
- Be very literal and concrete
- Make use of visuals (i.e. checklists, written directions, pictures, email)
- Check for understanding, invite questions
- Allow use of note-taking
- Breakdown multi-step directions into single steps
- Allow for processing time (up to 20 seconds)
- Use concrete, concise language



Communication Challenges & Strategies

May:

- [illegible]



Social Skills Challenges & Strategies



May:

- Exhibit lack or awkward eye contact, posture, and gestures
- Have difficulty with changes in rules and routine
- Misunderstand jokes, sarcasm, or inferential language
- Have difficulty with appropriate tone of voice or volume
- Narrow interests and passions
- Avoid small-talk
- Inappropriate emotional reactions
- Extremely rule-bound
- Difficulty with group work
- Provide direct feedback
- Use concrete language –avoid sarcasm or idioms
- Provide reasons/rationale for activities or tasks
- Use syllabus and denote changes in a timely manner
- Assign roles for group work
- If a student gets "stuck", provide a clear end and let them know we are moving on
- **Get to know/recognize strengths and interests – build a rapport & trust!**

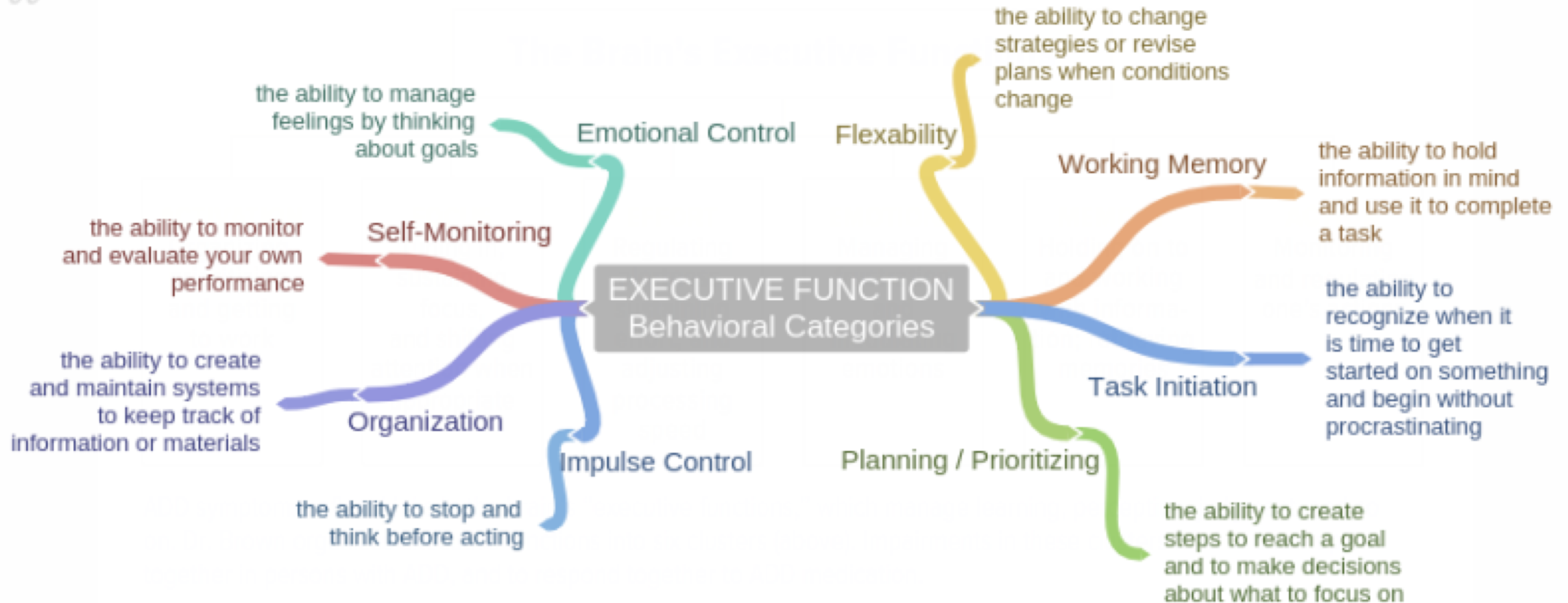
Sensory Challenges & Strategies

- Hyper – or – hypo sensitive (i.e. lights, sounds, smells, textures)
- May be easily distracted by sensory input
- May become overwhelmed by sensory input
- May use calming strategies (i.e. pacing, self-talk, rocking)
- Allow for breaks during longer classes and meetings
- If you notice the student becoming uncomfortable, ask if they need anything
- Allow student to use calming strategies in an unobtrusive manner



Executive Functioning

gggle



Executive Functioning Strategies



- Provide additional visual, verbal and physical cues, as needed
- Provide examples
- Promote use of technology (apps for note taking, list making, calendars, reminders)
- Relate tasks and activities to “real-world” examples
- Ask for preferred method of communicating
- Provide meeting reminders
- Remind students that success is attributed to the use/failure to use strategies – not inability
- Celebrate successes! -no matter how big or small

Advising Students with Autism

BE PROACTIVE!

1. Establish a trusting relationship
2. Meet frequently & monitor progress and understanding
3. Prepare students for unexpected changes (avoid forcing changes)
4. Recommend classes that do not require extensive group work
5. Help prepare students for tests – support self-advocacy
6. Promote time management strategies
7. Address & redirect unusual/inappropriate behaviors in private
8. Recommend tutoring services or a peer/faculty mentor (formal or informal)
9. Help student get connected with other campus resources, as appropriate

Campus Systems of Support



- If a student has disclosed to you that they have autism, please refer to **FAU CARD!**
- If you are noticing a student is having difficulty and may require additional supports, refer to Student Accessibility Services (**SAS**)
- Other Campus Supports:
 - **CAPS** (Counseling and Psychological Services)
 - **Office of Family Engagement & Family Helpline**

Questions?



Contact Information

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