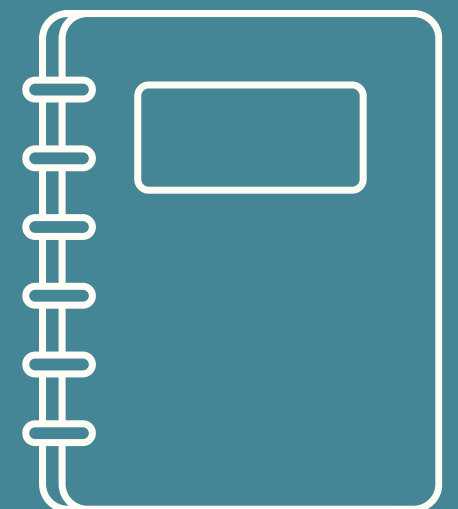
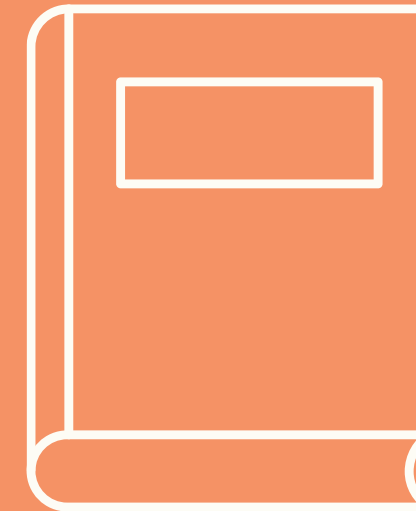


Strengthening Interprofessional Collaboration to Improve Educational and Clinical Supports for Autistic Learners

Cindy Gevarter, PhD, BCBA-D
,Jaime Branaman, MA, CCC-SLP, RBT, and
Jessica Nico, M.A., CCC-SLP, TSSLD, ASD-CS





Our Positionality

As a team, we bring together our intersecting identities as two PhD students, speech-language pathologists, and clinical instructors alongside our advisor, a special educator and BCBA-D.

We embrace the ways our professional training, cultural backgrounds, and lived experiences shape our work on autism, interprofessional collaboration, and neurodiversity-affirming practice.



Today's Objectives

01

Attendees will identify key competencies that support effective collaboration among educators, speech-language pathologists, behavior analysts, and other service providers.

02

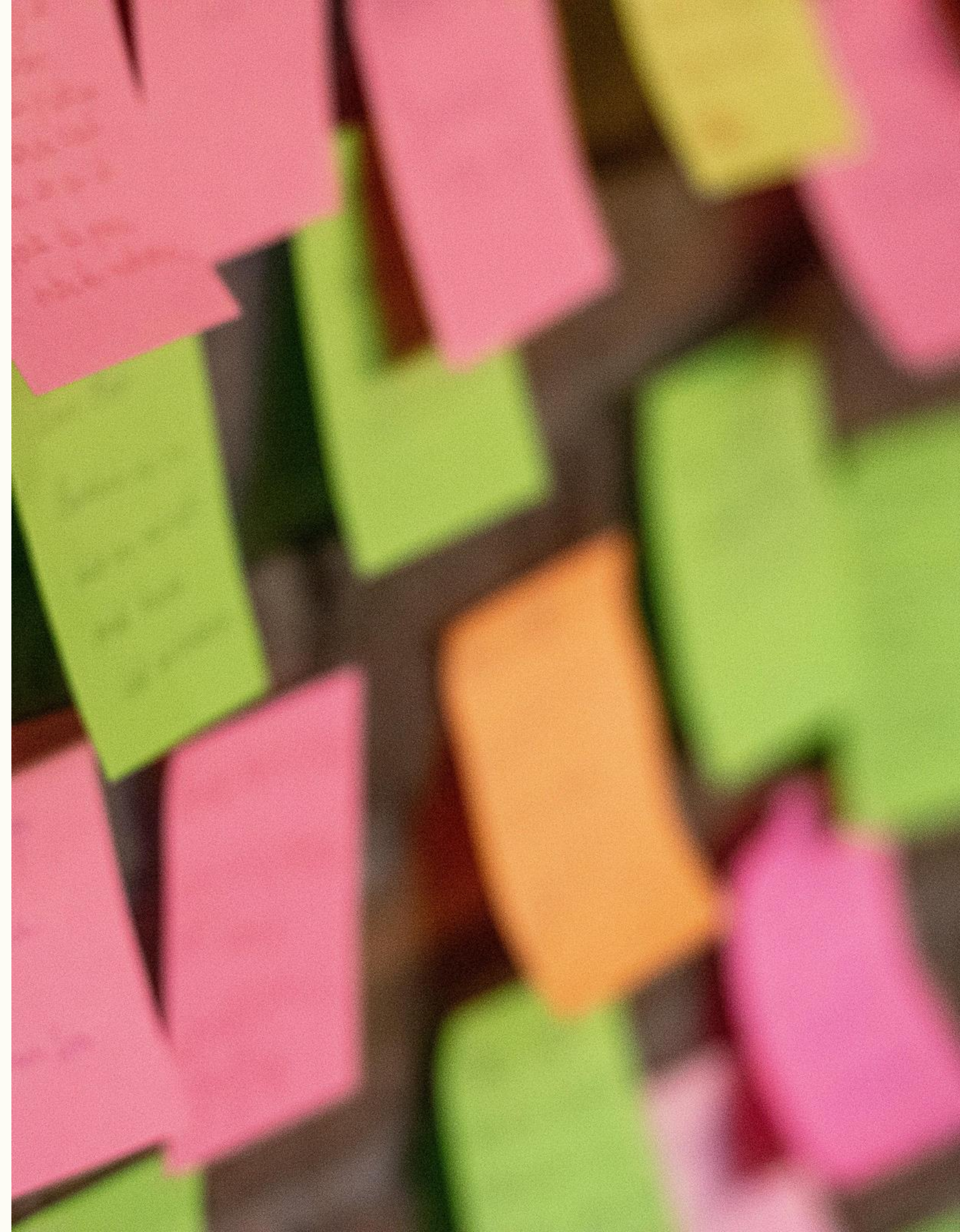
Attendees will apply practical interprofessional communication strategies to improve teamwork, problem-solving, and shared decision-making in educational settings.

03

Attendees will analyze common barriers to collaboration and implement strategies that foster respectful partnerships across disciplines.

Language Note

Both identity-first and person-first language are used throughout this presentation to appreciate and reflect the varied language preferences on self-identity across the autism community.



Ethical & Professional Foundations & Barriers



Importance of Collaboration

- Autistic learners receive therapeutic and educational services with a variety of providers (Henderson et al., 2023)
- A collaborative client-centered approach results in more effective intervention (Bowman et al., 2023)
- Interventions work in tandem
- Ethical responsibility

Ethical Responsibility for Collaboration: Examples across Fields

Special Educators

“Collaboration with professionals is important because no one professional possesses all of the skills needed to respond to the complex needs of students with disabilities.”

(CEC, High-leverage practices for students with disabilities 2024)

SLPs

“Individuals shall use every resource, including referral and/or interprofessional collaboration when appropriate, to ensure that quality service is provided.”

Principle 1 Rule B - ASHA Code of Ethics

BCBAs

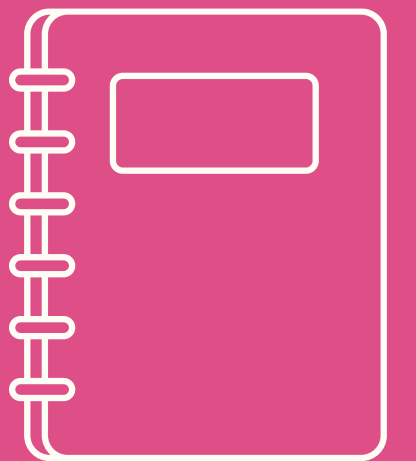
“....collaborate with colleagues from their own and other professions in the best interest of clients and stakeholders....address conflicts by compromising when possible and always prioritizing the best interest of the client..... document all actions taken in these circumstances and their eventual outcomes.”

Rule 2.10 - BACB Code of Ethics

Core Interprofessional Collaboration (IPC) Competencies

- Values & Ethics
- Roles & Responsibilities
- Teams & Teamwork
- Interprofessional Communication

(Slim & Reuter-Yuill, 2021)



Values & Ethics

- Shared respect
- Flexibility
- Client-centered practice



Roles & Responsibilities



- Understand and respect each professional's expertise
- Explicitly discuss roles
- Collaboratively assign duties

Teams & Teamwork

- Share accountability
- Explicitly discuss goal-setting





Interprofessional Communication

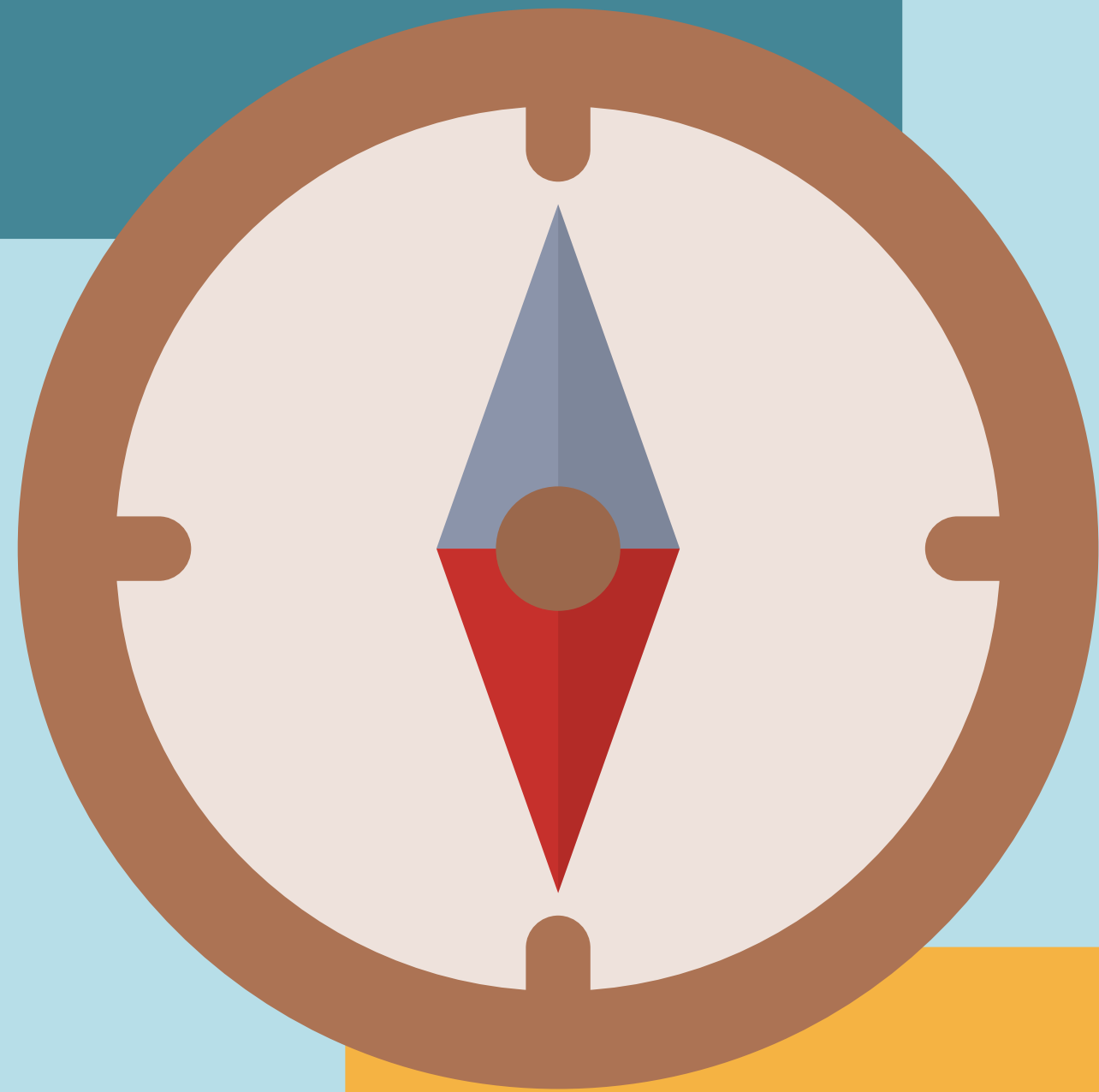
Dialogue should be:

- Bidirectional
- Respectful
- Proactive



Subcompetencies

- Select effective tools and technology
- Minimize use of discipline specific jargon
- Clearly express knowledge and thoughts
- Listen actively
- Encourage other's ideas
- Behave in a way that considers colleagues, the team, and clients
- Give and solicit feedback respectfully
- Recognize the value and impact of contributions and background
- Engage in behaviors that foster conflict resolution



Navigating Barriers:

Practical Strategies

Common Barriers

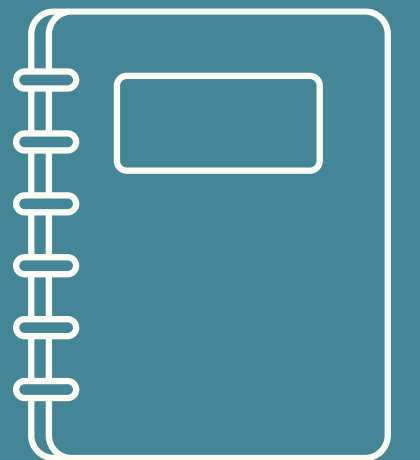
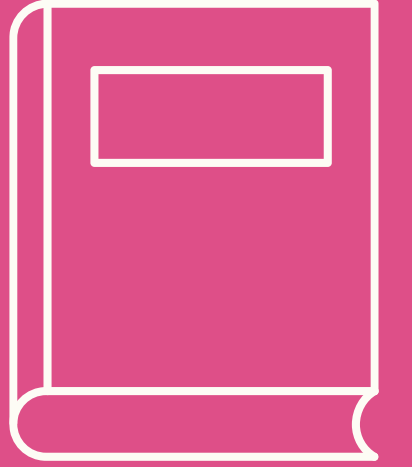
Communication breakdowns

Misunderstanding other professions

Varying ethical expectations

Limited professional humility

(Gerenser & Koenig, 2019; Lane & Brown, 2022)



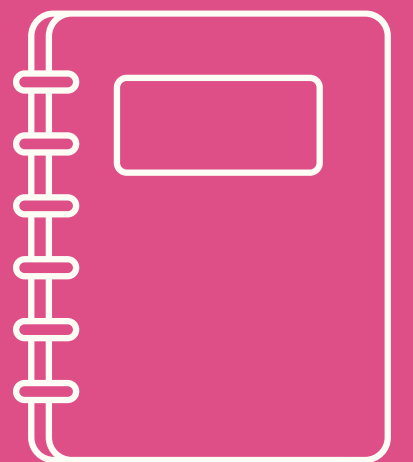
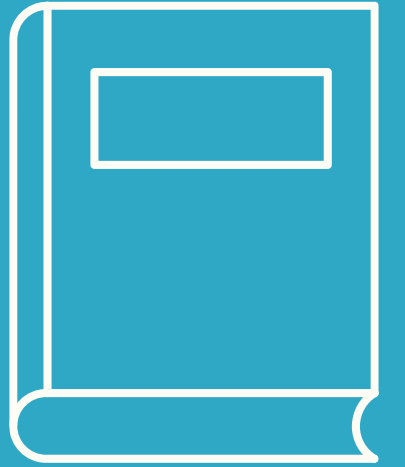
System Barriers

Spread of misinformation (e.g., social media)

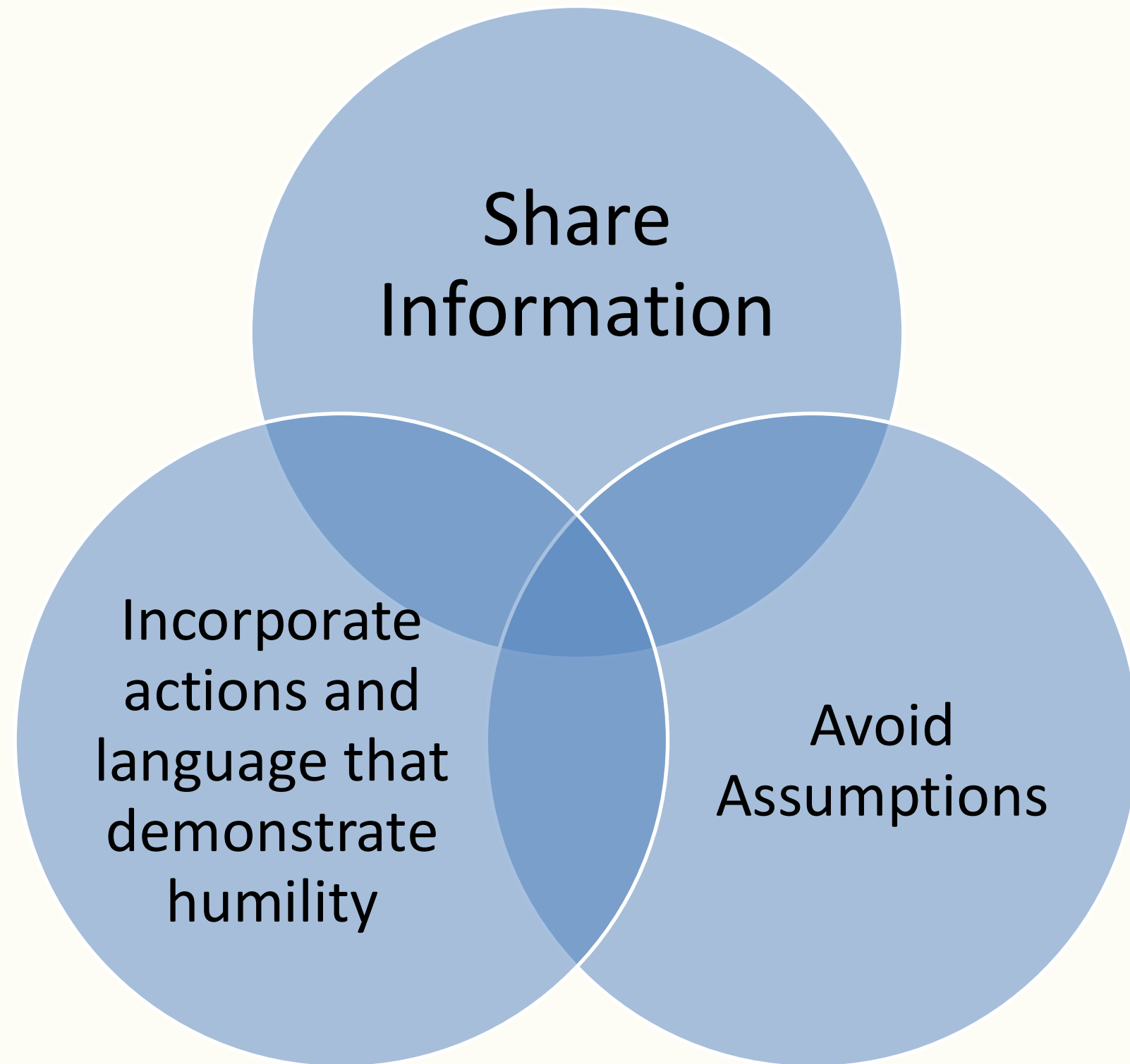
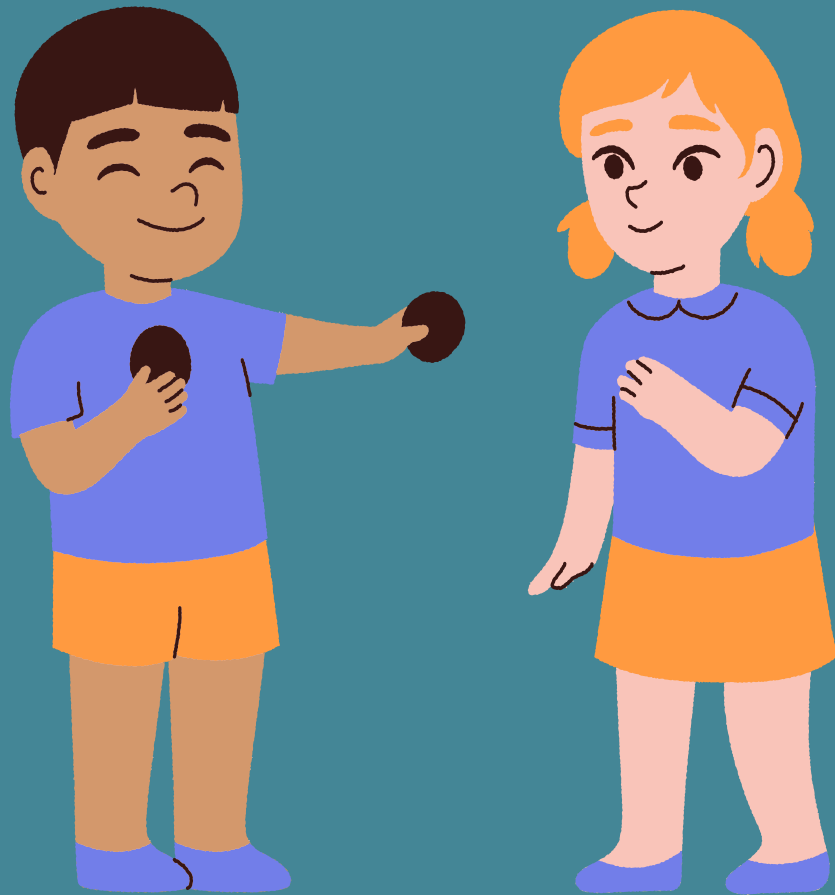
Lack of time for collaboration and teaming

Lack of explicit education on collaboration

(Lane & Brown, 2022)



Solutions for minimizing barriers



Sharing Information:

How can you support autistic learner (scope of practice + strengths)

Relative Strengths and Opportunities for Collaboration	
RELATIVE STRENGTHS	
SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS Diagnostics Spoken and Written Language Child Development Articulation/Phonology Swallowing and Feeding Language Structures Augmentative and Alternative Communication Speech, Fluency, and Voice	BEHAVIOR ANALYSTS Data Collection Strategies Behavior Interventions Functional Behavior Assessments Reinforcement and Motivation Single Case Design Methodology Functional Communication Training Preference Assessments Principles and Tactics of Effective Teaching
OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION	
SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS Behavior Management Functional Communication Training Single Case Design Methodology Data Collection Strategies Preference Assessments Principles and Tactics of Effective Teaching	BEHAVIOR ANALYSTS Developmental Norms Articulation/Phonology Structures of Language Feeding Language Sampling Augmentative and Alternative Communication

[ABAI IPC for BCBAs and SLP guidelines](#)

How a School-Based SLP Can Support a Child with Autism

Building communication. Supporting learning. Empowering connection.

Every voice matters!

A school-based Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) supports children with autism by building communication skills, increasing access to the curriculum, and helping them participate fully in their school community.

Social Communication

Helps the child use communication for a variety of social purposes across settings.

- Initiating and responding to others
- Taking turns in conversation
- Understanding and using nonverbal communication (e.g., eye contact, gestures, body language)
- Adjusting communication based on the listener and situation



Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)

Helps the child find and use the best communication tools to express themselves.

- Evaluating AAC needs
- Supporting use of low-tech options (e.g., picture boards, communication books)
- Supporting high-tech options (e.g., speech-generating devices)
- Modeling and teaching communication across daily routines
- Collaborating with teachers and families for consistent use



Literacy

Supports the child's access to reading and writing through their communication strengths and needs.

- Building phonological awareness (as appropriate)
- Supporting comprehension of text
- Expanding vocabulary
- Using AAC to support literacy (e.g., core word instruction, typing)
- Supporting written expression



Receptive Language Skills

Helps the child understand and make sense of information they hear or see.

- Following directions (1-3+ steps)
- Understanding vocabulary and concepts
- Identifying key details
- Understanding questions
- Making inferences
- Supporting comprehension across subjects and settings



Expressive Language

Helps the child share their thoughts, ideas, needs and feelings.

- Using words, signs, AAC or a combination to communicate
- Expanding vocabulary
- Combining words into phrases and sentences
- Telling about past and future events
- Asking questions
- Advocating for needs and preferences



Social Skills

Supports the child in building meaningful relationships and navigating the social world.

- Understanding and using social rules
- Recognizing and interpreting emotions (self and others)
- Developing perspective-taking
- Solving social problems
- Managing difficult social situations
- Practicing play and peer interaction skills



Communication opens opportunities.

School-based SLPs help children with autism find their voice and use it to learn, connect and belong.

BRIGHTER COMMUNICATORS
BRIGHTER FUTURES

Sharing Information: Past examples of successful collaboration experiences



Sharing Information: Implementation Plans

- Living Document
- Lists goals and objectives
 - Training Resources
 - Team member roles and responsibilities

- Resources:
- [Johnston et al 2023](#)
 - [SLP Nerdcast](#)
 - [Praacticalaac](#)

Child: Michael (4-year-old with autism)		Current Date: October 1st		Next Update: 1 month	
AAC system(s)	Primary: TouchChat AAC application using direct selection with finger Backups: PECS book; manual sign				
Long term goal	By the end of the school year, Michael will use his TouchChat or vocal speech to communicate for a variety of purposes (e.g., request, reject, comment, answer questions) using at least 3-word phrases in 80% of opportunities across routines.				
Short-term objectives	By the end of the month, Michael will use 1-symbol TouchChatl responses to request or reject items, actions or social interactions, across a variety of routines in 80% of opportunities, for at least 5 consecutive days.				
Strategies	Aided Language Modeling: Model AAC use during routines Embedded instruction: create communication opportunities during routines Least-to-most-prompting: pause, verbal reminder, model symbol selection				
Training Resources	TouchChat operation and editing: https://touchchatapp.com/videos?category=3&page=1 Aided Language Modeling https://saltillo.com/images/putting-aided-language-into-practice-aac-putting-aided-language-to-practice-handout.pdf Embedded instruction https://staging.ilc.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Communication_opportunities_in_the_Classroom.pdf Least-to-most-prompt hierarchy: https://communicationmatrix.org/Uploads/Posts/12372/AAC%20Prompt%20Hicrarchy%209-1-16%20kb%20jl.pdf				
Targeted Vocabulary	<u>Core Words:</u> Yes, no, all done, my turn, help, give, play, go <u>Contextual (Fringe) words:</u> Art: crayon, glue, scissors, cut, paste; Literacy centers/ story time: turn page, book, read; names of preferred books (e.g., Brown Bear), letters; Snack: juice, goldfish, crackers, pretzels, water; Bathroom: potty, wash, turn on; Play/sensory: trains, dinosaur, car, spin, swing, squeeze, tickle				
Team Member Responsibilities and Feedback					
Team member	Responsibilities	Contexts	Feedback (successes, challenges, new vocabulary needed)		
SLP	• Add new vocabulary • Use teaching strategies during speech sessions/ push-in time • Take data during speech sessions • Model strategies for staff using just-in-time training • Gather team input • Update plan and AAC system as needed • Provide training videos to parents	Group pull-out speech sessions with peers (peer play routines); Push-in classroom activities (art, literacy, play)	Success with requesting items and some actions during art time and peer play; consistently using <i>NO</i> , but not <i>YES</i> ; likely an transition to more commenting/with known vocabulary during preferred routines; not yet navigating through category folders independently (can do with a model); staff embedding more opportunities		
Teacher	• Use instructional strategies throughout the day • Provide feedback on strategy use to educational assistants • Provide input to SLP • Take data on least 1 routine each day	Classroom routines: story book reading, literacy centers; peer play; art	Will independently request different preferred items and starting to request more actions (needs more support to recognize icons). Category navigation is a challenge. Could use words for circle time activities (shapes, color, greetings, calendar words)		
Educational Assistants	• Make sure device is charged/available • Use instructional strategies throughout the day • Provide input to SLP and teacher	Classroom routines and activities of daily living: story book reading, literacy centers; peer play; art, meal-time, bathroom routine	Success requesting during meal time and starting to recognize food category; Difficulty with bathroom words (less preferred activity); could add more words for art (paint, paper) and play (build, blocks).		

Sharing Information:

Activity Matrixes



Activity	Nathan	Jamal
Arrival & choice time at table 12:45 – 1:00	-Gaining a peer's attention by saying his/her name -Responding to peers	-Following Directions -Responding to peers
Individualized Time with Teacher 1:00 – 1:40	-Answering WH Questions -Asking for a turn -Gaining a peer's attention	-Answering WH Questions -Pronouns -Commenting to peers -Gaining a peer's attention
Wash hands/ Transition 1:40 – 1:50	-Following Directions -Drying hands	-Following Directions
Snack 1:50 – 2:00	-Responding to peers -Greetings	-Gaining a peer's attention by saying his/her name -Responding to peers
Small Group Activity 2:00 – 2:10	-Responding to peers -Asking for a turn	-Responding to peers -Commenting to peers
Individualized Time with Teacher 2:10 – 2:55	-Feature, Function, Class -Following Directions	-Feature, Function, Class -Pronouns -1:1 Correspondence
Departure 2:55 – 3:00	-Following Directions	-Following Directions

Sharing Research, Strengthening Practice

Ideas for Special Education Teachers and Related Service Providers to Share Research

1

JOURNAL CLUB



Read. Discuss. Apply.

- Choose an article
- Rotate facilitators
- Discuss key takeaways
- Consider classroom or therapy applications

2

GOOGLE NOTEBOOKLM



Use AI to simplify research.

- Upload articles or reports
- Generate summaries and FAQs
- Create discussion questions
- Compare ideas across sources

3

SHARE & SUMMARIZE



Make research bite-sized.

- Share a 1-2 minute research highlight
- Create one-page summaries
- Use visuals when possible
- Focus on practical takeaways

4

SHARE REPUTABLE RESOURCES



Stay current. Share what you learn.

Examples:

- The Informed SLP
- ABA Speech
- IRIS Center
- SLP Nerdcast
- ASHA Leader
- Understood.org
- Exceptional Lives

5

CREATE A RESOURCE HUB



Save, organize, and revisit.

- Shared team library
- Organize by topic
- Encourage contributions
- Keep resources accessible

Examples:

- Teams
- OneNote
- SharePoint
- Google Drive

Avoiding Assumptions: Don't let theory be the barrier!

- Don't assume negative
- Ask colleague to describe what they mean
- Observe
- Note similarities rather than differences



Can I have a cookie?

Common Terms for Children Who Repeat Verbal Speech of Others

These terms describe when a child repeats words or phrases they have heard someone else say.



Can I have a cookie?



ECHOLALIA

The broad term for repeating words or phrases heard from someone else.

Can be immediate (right after hearing) or delayed (hours, days, or even longer).



IMMEDIATE ECHOLALIA

Repeating words or phrases right after hearing them.

Example: Adult says, "Time to go," and the child repeats, "Time to go."



DELAYED ECHOLALIA

Repeating words or phrases after a delay—sometimes minutes, hours, days, or even weeks later.

Example: Hearing a line from a TV show and repeating it days later.



SCRIPTING

Repeating whole phrases, sentences, or conversations from memory.

Often comes from TV shows, movies, books, or past conversations.



GESTALT LANGUAGE (GESTALT PROCESSING)

Using chunks of language ("gestalts") learned as whole units before being able to break them down and use individual words.



VERBAL STIMMING

Repeating words or sounds as a way to self-soothe, regulate emotions, or cope with sensory input.

Avoiding assumptions:

We don't always know why an intervention approach is not being implemented as planned



Avoiding Assumptions:

That ethical guidelines prevent collaboration

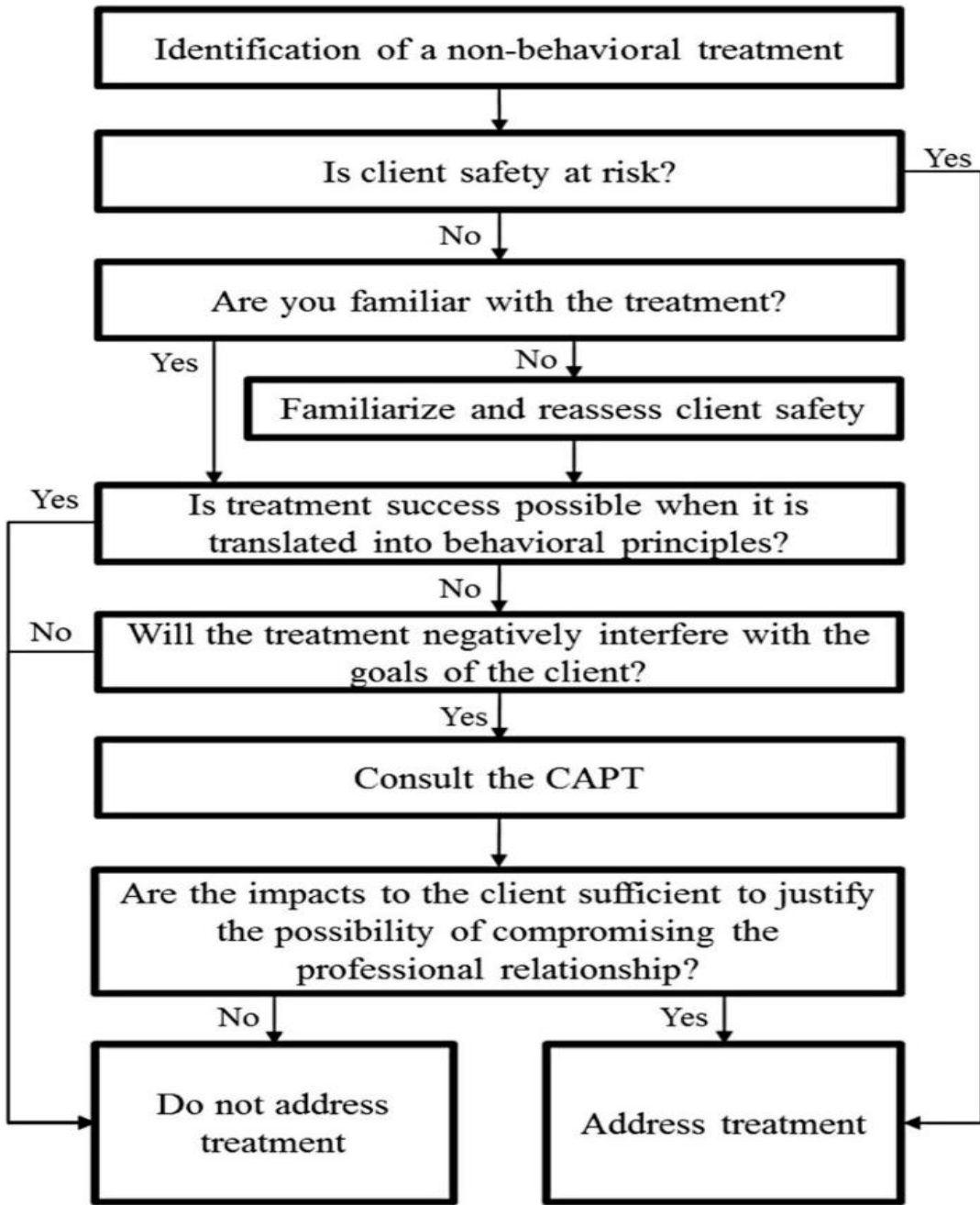


Fig. 1 A decision-making model for assessing nonbehavioral treatments

DISCUSSION AND REVIEW PAPER

Maintaining Professional Relationships in an Interdisciplinary Setting: Strategies for Navigating Nonbehavioral Treatment Recommendations for Individuals with Autism

Matthew T. Brodhead

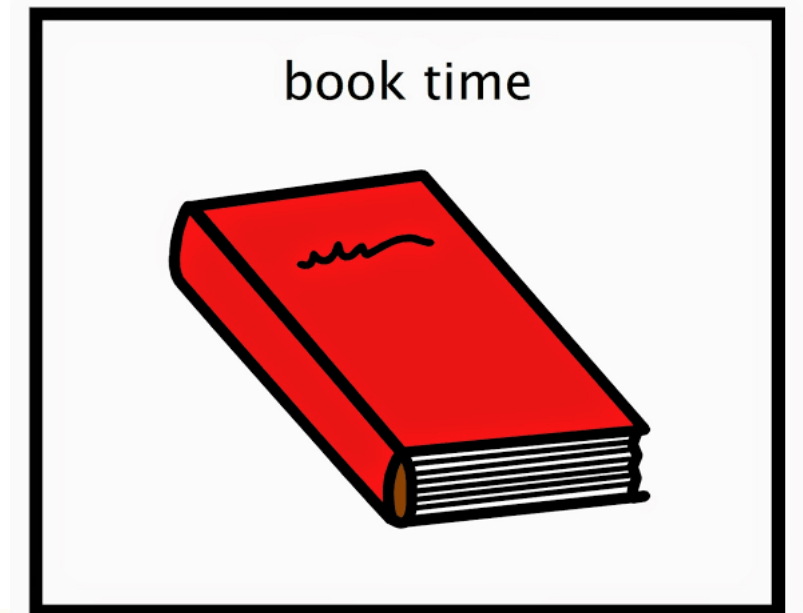
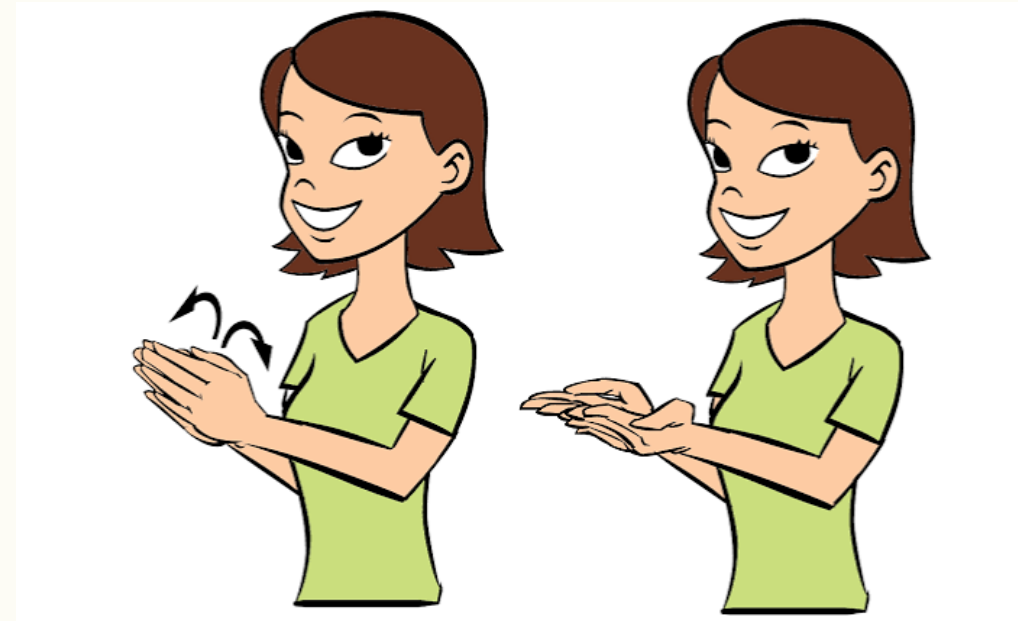
Table 1 Checklist for analyzing proposed treatments

Domain and category	Probability
(1) Function-based treatment	
Treatment addresses the function of behavior	Low/medium/high/NA
Treatment will not increase challenging behavior	Low/medium/high/NA
Treatment will result in the acquisition of an alternative replacement behavior	Low/medium/high/NA
(2) Skill acquisition	
Treatment will result in acquisition of functional skills	Low/medium/high/NA
Treatment does not increase inappropriate behaviors	Low/medium/high/NA
Treatment does not negatively affect other acquired skills	Low/medium/high/NA
(3) Social outcomes	
Treatment promotes inclusion into social situations	Low/medium/high/NA
Treatment results in the acquisition of socially appropriate skills	Low/medium/high/NA
(4) Data collection	
Data will be collected	Low/medium/high/NA
Data collection captures target behavior(s) of interest	Low/medium/high/NA
Data collection will capture treatment efficacy	Low/medium/high/NA
(5) Treatment integrity	
Stakeholders can be trained to implement the treatment	Low/medium/high/NA
Treatment is likely to be implemented consistently	Low/medium/high/NA
(6) Social validity	
Treatment corresponds with the short-term goals of the stakeholders	Low/medium/high/NA
Treatment corresponds with the long-term goals of the stakeholders	Low/medium/high/NA
The client will favor treatment	Low/medium/high/NA
The form of reinforcement is appropriate	Low/medium/high/NA
The targeted outcomes are socially acceptable	Low/medium/high/NA
(7) Resources	
Treatment does not require significant financial resources	Low/medium/high/NA
Treatment does not require significant time resources	Low/medium/high/NA

Note: outcomes may be weighted differently depending on the needs of the client

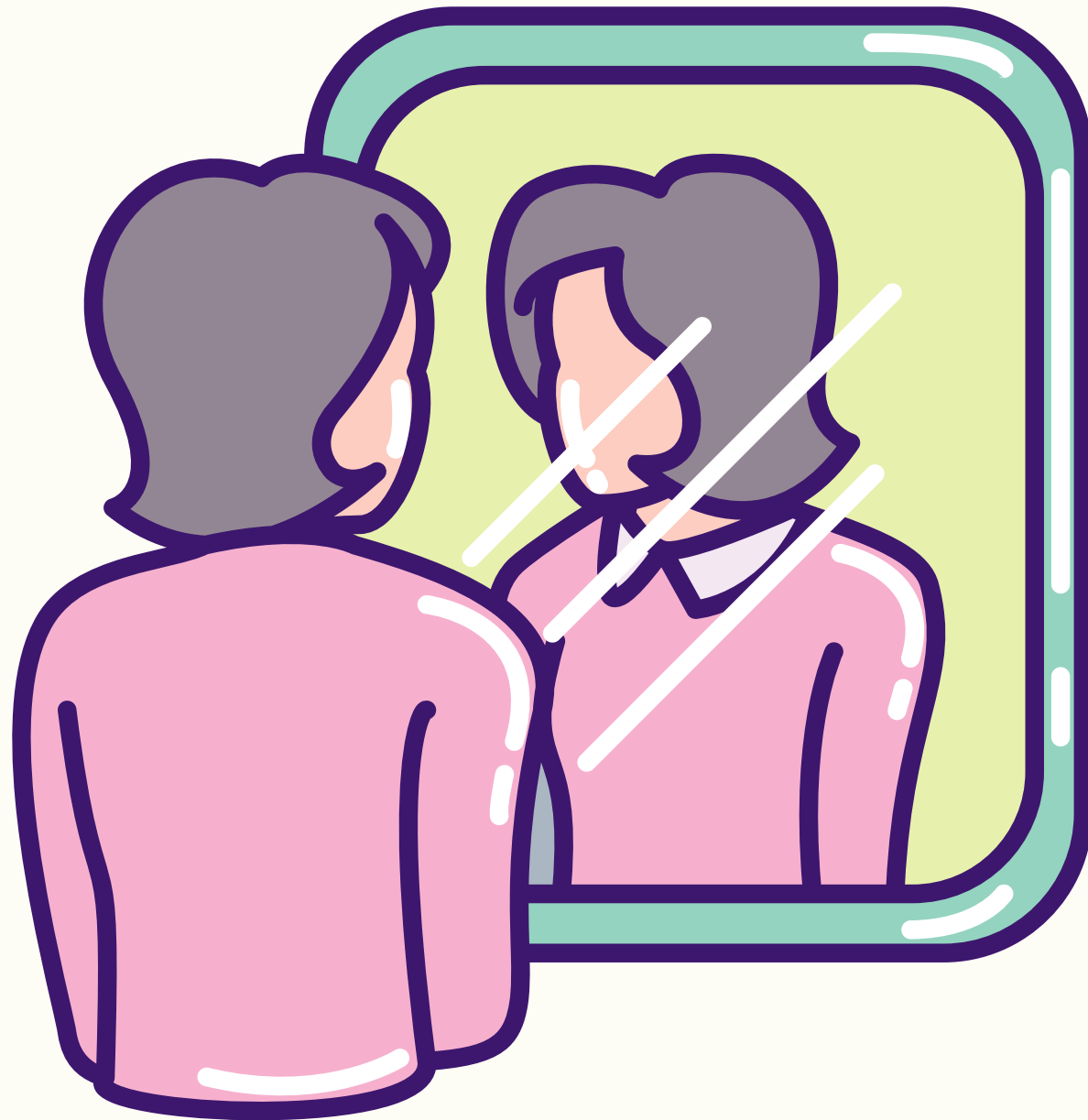
Avoiding assumptions:

That your evidence and knowledge base is the only correct path



Jessic
a





Incorporate Self-Reflection

- Use IPC surveys and questionnaires to reflect on own practices
 - Interprofessional Professionalism Assessment (IPA) (Frost et al., 2018)
 - SPICE-R2 Instrument
- We need to build awareness of our own practices (strengths and weaknesses)



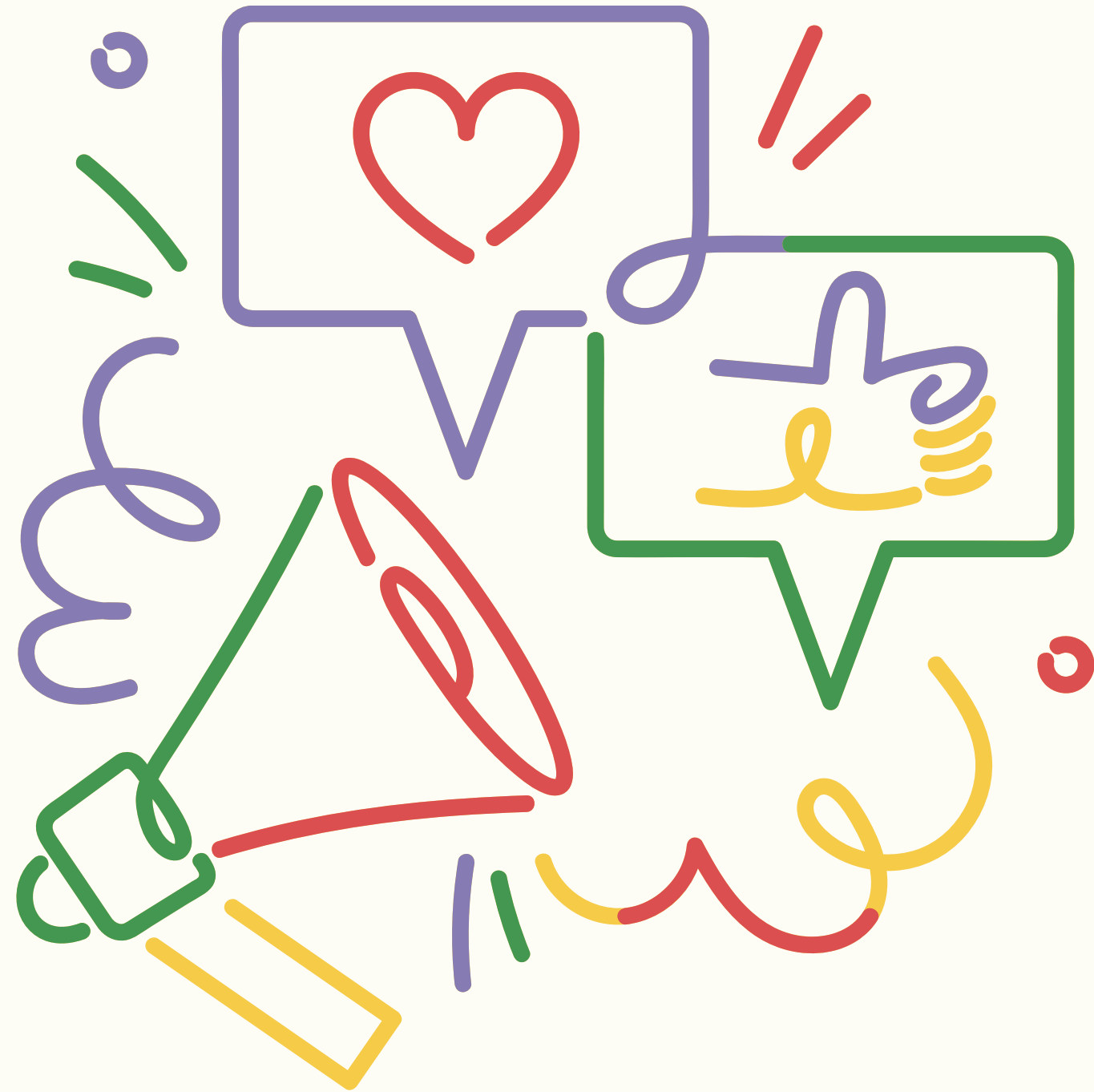
Practice Reflective Listening

- Summarize what you understand from what someone says to get confirmation or clarification

Monitor Language

- Practice changing jargon to everyday language
- Find a shared vocabulary
- Model translating each other's language rather than dismiss or critique it in front of student
- Use of "we" to share responsibility
- Avoid "always" and "never" statements





Respond-- Don't react

- Take a breath and a break if needed before continuing a more contentious interaction

Be Curious; Ask Questions

- Gain more information and clarify terminology by asking, “What do you mean by that?”
- Recast or expand statements to align with current literature, without shutting down inquiry.



Debrief after collaborative meetings

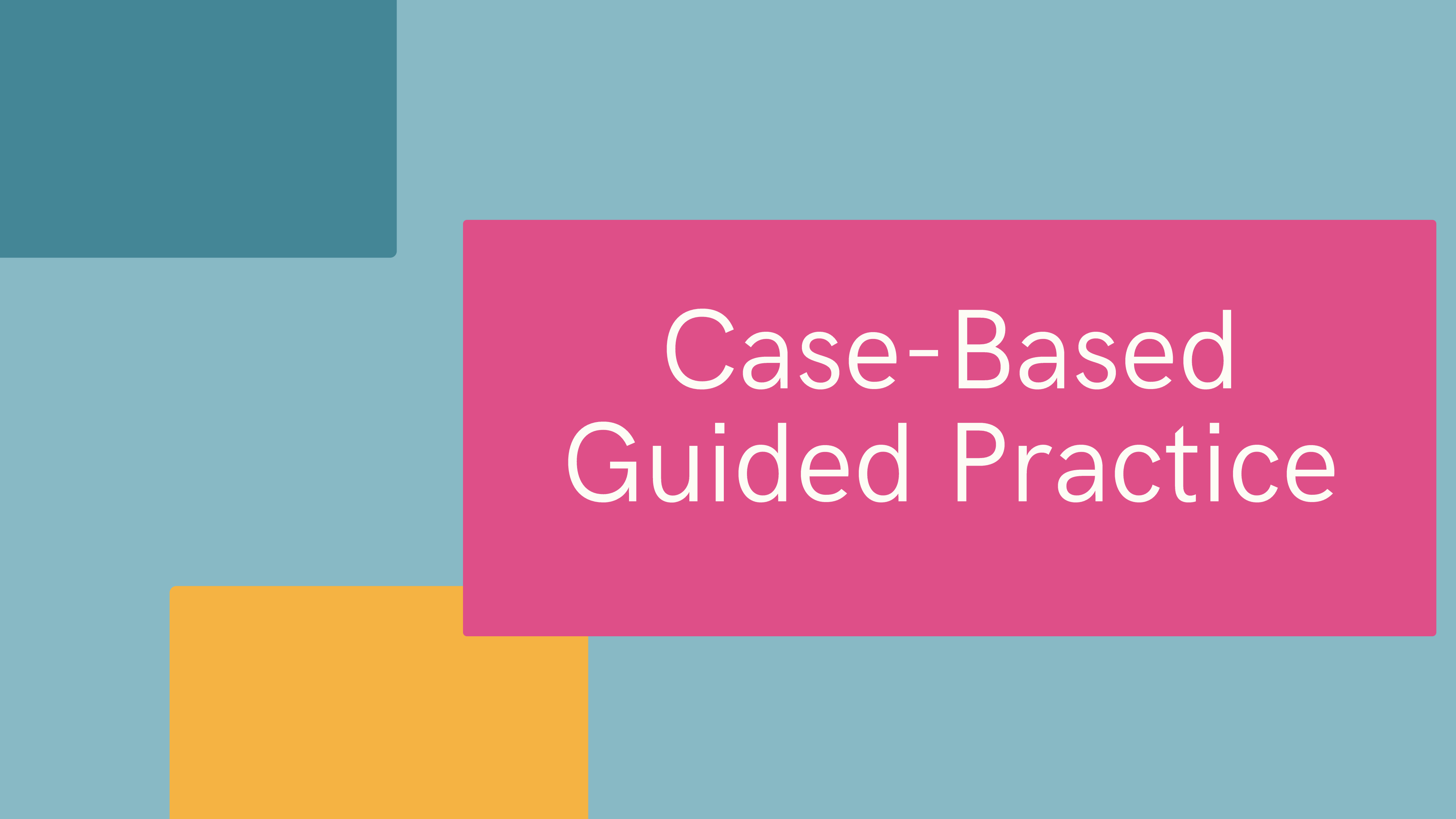
- Highlight what went well
- Discuss what was a challenge



When conflict arises in IPC...



- Translate terminology across fields
- Focus on observable behaviors, not the speculative “why”
- Focus on the “I can,” not the “I can’t”
- Present multiple strategies in the “toolbox” and allow guided trial and error
- Recast misconceptions with evidence, not judgment
- Advocate for your specific needs
- Use negotiation skills



Case-Based Guided Practice

Let's practice

- Please pair up with people near you (ideally in a different role)
- We will give you a case-based scenario
- Use reflective questions to discuss case and strategies



CASE STUDY



Case-based Scenario

AAC Case
Echolalia case





Questions?

Thank you!



cgevarter@unm.edu
jbranaman@unm.edu
jnico@unm.edu

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